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ABSTRACT

The conferences were part of a series on the development of the field of postsecondary education in Britain. Proceedings of the first conference, on the development of new college organizational structures, include: the concept of organizational development (A.B. Cherns); organization and education (G.E.A. Harrison); introduction to a project to consider alternative organizational structures (R. Bailey); and open discussion sessions. Proceedings of the second conference, on the college and other educational institutions, include: schools and further education colleges: policy issues (R.M. Sharp); response and interaction between the college and other agencies (G.R.A. Titcomb); the college's extending boundaries (N.C. Clegg); an introduction to a project to review methods of integrating postsecondary education activities with those of lower educational levels and suggest improvements (C.H. Turner); and an introduction to a project to identify major current and likely future developments with other institutions and other areas of work and to outline policy plans. (MSE)

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Vol 8 No 7

Study Conference 75/20 and 75/24

The Development of FE IV

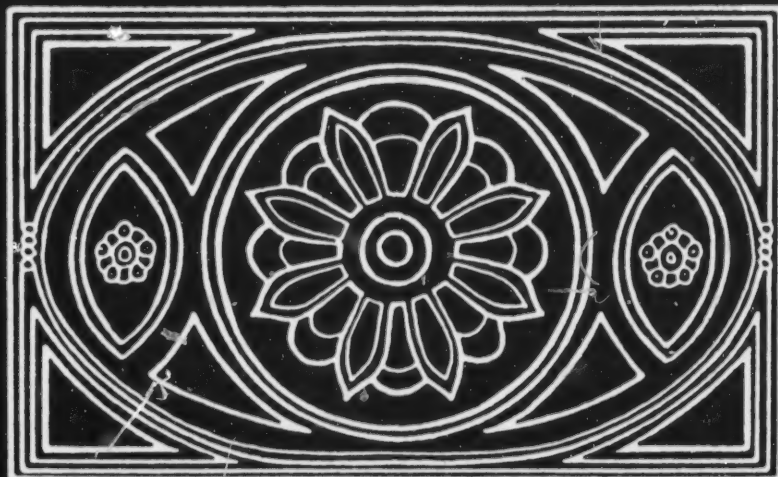
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FOREWORD

Both the conferences reported here were very much concerned with the relationship between external and internal changes. Study conference 75/20 considered how far the organisational structures of colleges were appropriate to cope with changes due to external pressures, social, political and economic. It discussed alternative structures, matrix and faculty organisations, committee structures and information systems, and studied particularly the problems of those colleges which were being merged. Study conference 75/24 looked outwards at the ways in which colleges could co-operate with other bodies working in associated fields, again under similar external pressures as those discussed in the previous conference. There was the question of the 16-19 age-group and relationships with schools, involving link courses, tertiary colleges and the opportunities to collaborate in resource allocation and curriculum. There were the different forms of collaboration at more advanced levels, for example the regional management centres and the new institutions of higher education. There were too the diverse contacts between colleges and the careers service, community education provision and national bodies such as TEC and BEC.

The two conferences were part of a series which took place over the spring and summer of 1975. The series considered the development of FE, from a variety of aspects, over the next few years, with the intention of creating strategies to cope with change.

These conferences were reported by Michael Locke.

"One should begin a talk on organisational development with some reasons why organisations should change. There is a sort of unwritten assumption that there is something wrong with traditional forms of organisation that they must be changed, but I don't think we need to start with that assumption. Therefore I am going right back to the beginning and discuss the question why. If at all, organisations need to change.

traditional organisations Everybody knows that traditional organisations have been designed on two basic principles:

- 1 the division of labour; and
- 2 the upward export of problems or variance. The way of getting things done was to specify very precisely the tasks that everyone had to do, and in order to make sure they did them you put supervisors on top of them. If anything went wrong, the supervisors were there to put it right. As organisations grew, the tasks became more specialised and so you needed a bigger and bigger top hamper of supervision.

The question is what is wrong with that, and so I have to discuss briefly the changes that are taking place in the environment which affect the need for organisational change.

changing environment One of the features of the traditional type of organisation was that it operated satisfactorily under placid environmental conditions. It worked well where the input - whether of people or materials - was uniform. It worked well on the assumption that the people entering the organisations were committing themselves to lifetime careers. It is perfectly clear that none of these preconditions are still present.

These changes to the environment can be summarised under five headings: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Cultural.

1 Political If you look at the political environment of further and higher education you can see that over the past decade or so we have been caught up in the business of social engineering. What was regarded as belonging to the area of improving skills and capacities of people has been caught up in notions about changing the structure of society through monkeying around with the educational system. Further and higher education has thus followed secondary education into the political arena. Probably it would have arrived there anyway

as it became more expensive because its demand for resources was bound to raise political issues. We have seen in other countries the extent to which this can go and to which we might be led. Everybody knows what has happened in the United States with open admissions, with so-called affirmative action. Everybody knows here the legal procedures which we have been obliged to take to our defence because of the way in which the law has been construed on the relationship between the student and the programme to which he has committed himself.

The principal significance for educational organisations I would regard as disastrous: it has strengthened the forces of centralisation against those of devotion and delegation. These changes have always introduced greater rigidities. For example, it is now necessary to commit yourself to the content of a course about two years ahead of the time you intend to teach it, and you cannot change it in less than two years in case some student has a legal right to the course as originally stated.

centralisation 2 Economic The renewed scarcity of resources has hit hard, especially following an era of comparative abundance, and again the automatic reflex response of organisations to scarcity of resources is further centralised control. Resources are concentrated in the centre because that appears to be more efficient management, but in fact it reduces the potential responsiveness of the periphery. Scarcity of resources also supports the old guard and handicaps new developments because new developments can only take place if the old are prepared to yield.

3 Social We have criticism of elitism, the decline of deference in society, the lowering of the legal age of adulthood and demographic changes. The demographic changes combine with the expansion of our institutions to produce a demographic structure which is downright dangerous in a period of restriction. There are a lot of comparatively young people who came in on the crest of the wave, who now see a long haul before possible promotion and who find themselves closer in interests and outlook to students than to the greyheads at the top of the organisations in which they serve. It is difficult for any administration to rely on its faculty in any crunch with its students.

4 Technological The effects of technological change have been uneven. On the one hand the technology of education has changed little but on the other hand technological change has made an enormous difference to the kinds of skills required by students and their durability. The once-for-all learning process has been eroded.

disorientation 5 Cultural I distinguish this from social change in that it is cultural change which brings the purposes of education under scrutiny and which raises questions about the goals within colleges. Students become disorientated about the purpose of the activities they are undertaking, and with that staff become disorientated. I think that the question of what we were supposed to be doing was taken for granted in the past.

If that brief analysis is anywhere near the mark it means that there are sufficient changes in the environment of all educational establishments to cause a re-

orientation of the organisation. Faced with uncertainty, as all these changes do face us, what sort of organisation do we need? No one form of organisation fits all needs. I believe we need a very wide variety of organisations, and each of them needs to be tailored to suit its own environment, its own purposes and the goals, needs and aims of the people who are going to be operating the organisation. On the other hand you cannot start totally from scratch: you need some design criteria.

design criteria What are these design criteria? I offer the following for discussion. I must emphasise that I am not telling you what the design criteria must be, and they are not written on tablets of stone but come out of studying the work of other people and some work of my own.

1 Compatibility The way in which you introduce change must be compatible with the nature of the change you are introducing. You cannot introduce participative methods by putting up a notice saying that from Tuesday everyone will participate. The only way to introduce participation is by participating. If you want people to operate a new organisation in a flexible style, if you want them to have the values of the organisations introjected into their own behaviour, then they must participate in formulating the objectives.

2 Minimal critical specification of tasks Some tasks have to be specified to some people, but beyond the absolutely essential things it is a mistake to specify too closely. Everybody knows the outcome of specifying very closely: if you give somebody a specific set of tasks to do, he has no responsibility for anything outside them. If he interprets his instructions literally but stupidly, you have no comeback. It is inefficient in running any kind of organisation to specify more than you need. What you find in the end is that you don't need to specify what people must do but you do need to specify what people must know.

boundaries 3 Sociotechnical criterion The traditional form of organisational design specified tasks in great detail, allocated them to people and erected supervision to deal with problems which were exported upwards. The sociotechnical criterion is that the most effective way of dealing with variance - that is, with those things that are unplanned, that cannot be specified, that have been specified but go wrong - is to deal with them as near the point at which they arise as possible. That has implications for the nature of the boundaries that one draws around departments. If you draw boundaries such that the variance which arises in Department A is not dealt with there but has to be dealt with somewhere else, then you introduce friction and the need to export conflicts upwards. It is enormously important for learning because if we are not responsible for putting right things that go wrong we never learn.

4 Minimal critical specification of tasks to roles As far as possible you should hire people to perform roles, not tasks.

sharing knowledge 5 Location of boundaries In traditional organisations boundaries have usually been placed on the principles of the tree Ts - technology, territory and time. People are grouped in a department because they operate the same technology. Or, if you have people working near each other, it may make

a kind of sense to draw departmental boundaries around them. Similarly, if two things happen closely in time and there is no time to do anything in-between, it may make sense to locate those two things in the same department. However, the use of these principles may result in boundaries occurring where they ought not, either because they conflict with the sociotechnical criterion (above) or because they prevent the sharing of learning that people need. You do not draw departmental boundaries which prevent or hinder people sharing the experience or knowledge they have learnt.

6 Design around human values You can design organisation to make sure that the people in them have jobs that are worthy of human beings.

If those are the design criteria that we should try to follow, the next question is How do you do it?

- 1 The essential preliminary to the redesign of organisations is the hammering out of some kind of management philosophy even if it is only a restatement of these criteria in terms of the particular organisation one is dealing with. The articulation of this philosophy should involve people at all levels of the organisation. In trying to articulate a philosophy of this kind, it turns out that generally what one needs to articulate are values rather than specific goals. The specific goals turn out to be the meaning that you can give these values in real situations.
- 2 It is not always possible to get the whole change process moving without some intervention from outside. If you have such intervention, then you need to be certain it is by people who share your goals.
- 3 It is a mistake to start with the interpersonal relationships and skills. At some stage it may be necessary to improve people's interpersonal skills but you do not get an organisation developing simply by hiring a T-grouper. That is not the place to start.

Whatever is undertaken takes a long time to get going. It takes longer to get started than it takes in the doing, but the period of getting started is enormously important and one should not worry if it takes a long time. According to the criterion of compatibility, you should start with a whole series of discussions at many levels. If there is an intervening person, it is no use him working only with you as the bossman, and it is no use him working without you. As soon as the boss shows a loss of interest, however, the impetus will slacken and people will think that they would be safer staying where they are than sticking their necks out. So if you are not totally committed don't start."

Discussion Arising

To questions about the means of introducing participation and of ensuring that the principal was identified with the teaching staff, Professor Cherns suggested that the place to start was with consultation and asking members of staff for their advice. Then they would begin to raise their own issues as problems, but it was no use forcing them to do things they were uncomfortable about. It might be useful for a principal to demonstrate that he was a teacher not just an administrator by doing some teaching. He warned against trying to cope with

change simply by establishing a new department or functionary; it would mean that the rest of the organisation would continue functioning as before.

"The next ten years may not see much change in education. You are already planning for ten years ahead, and we all know that resources will be limited by fact or national intent for some time ahead. I don't see the possibility of radical movement but if society goes on moving in a moderately civilised direction then the public education service is an amenity which ought to become more enjoyable, meaningful and relevant to people. It ought to be more oriented towards the needs of people rather than institutions. We can say from our experience that when in the past we have pinned our faith on institutions and described them in closed terms we have tended to be wrong. Whatever organisation one goes for against one's view of the future, it ought to be open-ended.

I'm one of those people in educational organisations who are dedicated to making things work and so in describing how we tackled our situation in Sheffield and reorganised the education department I am talking in practical terms. I'm not an organisational theorist, and most of our thinking had to be home-grown.

facing the problems At the beginning of the decade, or perhaps a little before, we in Sheffield took a long hard look at ourselves. As an authority Sheffield has certain great advantages; it is coherent and well provided with resources, has had a stable political government and has tended to think it knew where it was going. There were, however, a number of reasons why we were worried about the organisation:

- We had only a very generalised idea of where we were going and what we were up to; we just used the Education Act 1944 to justify everything we did.
- We had a traditional hierarchical organisation which was patently failing to get through the work; the work was bottle-necking, decisions were not being made and pressures and frustrations were building up.
- Administrative and advisory officers were confused in their roles and separated by a polarity they did not seek; administrative officers with an educational contribution to offer found themselves at their desks in a mound of paper, whilst advisers found themselves out in the field with little influence on the progress of the system in administrative and decision-making terms.
- We realised we were ill-prepared to meet the travails of local government reorganisation in 1974.

We began trying to sort out our objectives, and this proved to be difficult.

We found ourselves wrestling with unmanageable statements of philosophy which could not be pinned down to objectives. It became clear that we had to get our terminology exact but that, beyond a broad democratic statement of educational aims, it was not much use pursuing the philosophical argument. It was useful to pin down the statement of things that could be achieved by relating them to a timescale - in the first instance, two years. This was done in the belief that having made such a statement and then having shown whether or not objectives had been achieved we would contribute to the realisation of the prime aims. It was difficult: each individual comes to a discussion with his own portmanteau of judgments, values and assumptions and it is difficult to arrive at a statement common for everybody. One just has to hammer away to achieve precision in the setting of objectives and without doing this we could not have proceeded to the next stage - the creation of a new style of organisation. An organisation without stated aims and objectives is an odd organisation indeed.

catalysts We were assisted by management consultants who brought in extremely intelligent people and they acted as catalysts, though we discarded most of the detail of what they proposed. It was useful to be invited to step outside our internalised system and recognise an outside point of view.

The management consultants drove home to us the doctrine of accountability and emphasised that those in second and third tier positions had to be accountable for the sections of the service they were set in charge of. If this idea was pursued and they were made responsible for everything in that section, it was clear that it was physically impossible for the senior people to do all that was required of them. Assistant education officers were driven near to breaking point.

three elements The solution was to split up the accountability. We analysed the functions of the education department and divided the loads, separated the roles. We thought we could define three elements:

- 1 the planning function, the forward thinking and development;
- 2 the functional management, the day-to-day administration;
- 3 the interpretation, in the field, of central policy and the bringing back of intelligence, including all those who worked in the field, advisory officers, school health, careers, welfare officers, psychologists.

The organisation was divided into these three elements, each interacting with the other as in a matrix and in a non-hierarchical manner. Because of the work we had done on objectives we were able to identify a number of tasks and able to group them into credible areas and to appoint a programme manager for each area.

teams for tasks So, in forward thinking we had a team of perhaps twelve education officers, mostly with educationist backgrounds, which could be manoeuvred and deployed in response to perceived tasks. They could be reorganised at a moment's notice to deal with newly perceived tasks and could be dismantled when the reason for the task had disappeared.

The differences are considerable to those inside the organisation. The

organisation is much more nimble-footed and capable of swift response than the traditional structure. The day-to-day management is conducted efficiently, smoothly and without fuss by the functional management. By removing the hierarchy from on top of the functional managers, we have removed inhibitions and discovered more energy so that more work is done without strain. Moreover, in the process of talking out our objectives and in continuing the discussions we have developed a consensus which strengthens morale and enables individuals to believe they have a real part in moving the system forward. Additional benefits have been gained with the education committee. By taking pains to describe to the committee what we were seeking and by inviting its comments we have arrived at a body of intentions and policy to which both committee and administration subscribe. The committee has also been taken into the area of forward thinking and been able to enter into the financial planning of the whole authority with greater system and understanding.

the primary reasons From this experience I draw certain lessons:

- 1 There is no substitute for one's own thinking. The derived model is likely to be a snare and a delusion. One's own circumstances have to be analysed and one's own solutions found to match them.
- 2 The dangers of a derived organisation are very great. It is incredibly difficult to keep people directed towards the primary reasons for their being in communities, which in educational organisations are to achieve educational objectives, rather than keeping themselves happy as organisations. Organisations become self-perpetuating creations which it is difficult to break away from or modify once they attain the leading position in people's minds. The corporate management model which many local authorities derived from the Bains Report may be taken as an example of this. General administrators who do not run real services but who exist to service and provide amenities are not the right people to be putting down the markers for a service to people. Similarly a deficiency of Planning is that it is done by people who are all too often concerned with the physical attributes of roads, cars and space and not with the human aspects. Organisational concerns are given precedence over the primary reasons for running the services.
- 3 Feedback is enormously important. We built into our organisation the idea that it must constantly feed back - through the fieldwork element - an intelligence about the outside world which the organisation would not automatically provide for itself. There must be understanding of whether people outside say our management organisation is doing what we say it is.

We have set out objectives and the means to achieve them and tried to evaluate or assess whether we have succeeded. What sort of evaluation is one looking for? Is it the sort of evaluation which is internalised and internally consistent or is it an evaluation which calls on judgments from outside the system? A fault of many educational organisations is that they are content with internal evaluation. As a chief education officer, I am not allowed to get away with internal assessment. It is a useful exercise to identify the various audiences with whom one is likely to interact and see if their judgments are valid for our organisation. If you do not persuade people that you are useful, you are not being very successful. If you insist on providing activities

that satisfy you as an educator but do not persuade other people that what you are doing is useful so that they do not provide you with funds to go on doing the job, then you have failed.

achieving stated ends I can offer some truisms based on this experience:

- There is no virtue in an organisation qua organisation; organisations are a technology, a means of getting things done through the media of people and resources.
- Means that are divorced from ends are rogue, unreferenced and can even be irresponsible; ends without means are impossible, and means directed to ends without reference to men and materials are unreal. The approach to organisation must therefore be conceived as a whole.
- The ends of an organisation that are not admitted by the people who work in it are unlikely to be achieved except by accidents; ends which are not accepted will evoke hostility when they are applied or at best indifference, and indifferent people are unlikely to achieve the stated ends.
- A constant pressure of work forced through a reducing series of values - which is what a traditional hierarchy is like - must result in backpressure or rupture.
- The original hierarchies headed by priests or kings were successful because they existed to give expression to power in well regulated circumstances, in primitive human conditions and for limited purposes. The way our educational systems are moving, I think quite quickly, is towards a more flexible, fluid and individually oriented future, and this is a very good reason to adopt an open-ended and open-minded organisation."

Discussion Arising

Members of the conference raised the problems of what one did with people who were unwilling to accept the objectives of the organisation. There were, Mr Harrison suggested, in any organisation cupboards and means of bypassing people but he emphasised that the new structure in Sheffield had resulted in those running the day-to-day service finding a new release of energy. Other members wondered if some change was undertaken for the sake of change and useful just for shaking everybody up. The virtue of the open-ended and matrix structure, said Mr Harrison, was that it could be renewed when necessary.

TEACH-IN

A teach-in on the problems of college organisation and alternative structures was held with Dr R Bailey, Professor A B Cherns and Mr D C Spencer.

Three topics which recurred throughout the conference dominated the discussion at the teach-in: the applicability of the matrix organisation; the relationship between grading of staff and college organisation; the ability of existing structures to cope with conflict.

matrices The matrix structure was, said Professor Cherns, a valuable means of solving certain organisational problems. It provided a combination of permanent organisation and temporary assignment that was useful if the problem was to maintain a structure in which people could develop their careers and skills and at the same time to tackle medium term tasks. A difficulty was that people would seek to withdraw from the matrix groups because they realised that their career advancement depended on their own skills rather than the performance of their group; team teaching suffered from teachers' fears of losing their skill identity.

Members of the conference were doubtful whether a matrix structure could be applied across a very large organisation - such as a whole polytechnic. Professor Cherns agreed that the bigger the organisation, the less likely a matrix was to succeed. Groups of 6-8 people could co-operate most of the time on a task but larger numbers might turn into committees.

Mr Spencer pointed out that one of the original ideas of the matrix was to form temporary task forces but that the notion had been lifted into further education where it was applied to two fairly stable groups, those of subject grouping and course base. Moreover, what a college had to achieve through its organisation was more complex than an industrial process or an education office such as Sheffield's, which Mr Harrison had explained earlier in the conference.

rewards The panel's comments on the need for an appropriate means of rewarding effort in groups if a matrix was to work well led into a discussion of the relationship between grading, pay and responsibilities. Comparisons were made between the grading structure of further education with those of the universities and the armed forces. It was noted that universities could promote on the basis of individual merit rather than responsibilities and that the army had distinguished between rank and post, whereas further education had a

defined structure of grades. This structure had a restrictive effect on the way in which a college could organise itself.

structures The question was raised as to whether colleges had the structures or mechanisms to cope with the situation when there were fundamental disputes in the colleges over objectives and values. Professor Cherns suggested that the best that could often be achieved was to contain conflict or to find an area which all the protagonists could agree was neutral. The college which was open to society would be affected by the differences of opinion within society, and these differences were real ones not just failures of communication.

Four witnesses joined the syndicates to assist in the discussion of college organisation structures: Mr J O'Neill, Assistant Director (Physical Resources), Middlesex Polytechnic, Ms B Tipton, University of London Institute of Education, Mr P C Webb, HMI, and Mr G E Wheeler, Deputy Director, Coombe Lodge.

resource decisions Mr O'Neill spoke of his role in maximising the use of physical resources at Middlesex Polytechnic with its 17 sites and 4900 full-time and sandwich students. He was questioned in one syndicate, for example, about his relationship to the academic board and about whether it was the job of the academic board and its committees to consider questions of resources. He answered that the academic board did not have executive powers over resources but that policy on academic affairs could not be determined without consideration of resources. In talking about the polytechnic's academic development plan he pointed out that the expansion was conditional on the resources being available - previously planned student intake had been temporarily restricted because conditions at all sites were not satisfactory and raised the question of whether in bringing staff:student ratios to 1:10 overall some teachers would be made redundant. He described, in one syndicate, the matrix system of Middlesex Polytechnic by which staff are deployed within a grid formed by resource centres, on the one hand, and course leaders on the other, and was questioned on the number of Grade 6 head of department posts involved, to which he replied that the governing body had been able to decide the number and grading of posts, using the discretion available in the Burnham agreement.

career satisfaction Ms Beryl Tipton of University of London Institute of Education described how her study 'Conflict and change in a technical college' had suggested that the structure of technical colleges gave them a climate peculiarly conducive to change. She asked if the coming years would provide as many opportunities for expansion change and the building of new courses, and asked how, if there were not, the colleges would cope with the restlessness and energy of their staffs. Her study had made two points:

- 1 that staff were heterogeneous and less held together by common norms and values and thus less inhibited about pursuing their own careers and less clear about the purposes of the college;
- 2 that some people in FE were not getting as much satisfaction out of the business of teaching as they expected. How would staff respond if in the

future there was more control over their institutions, and where would they find, if they were less able to pursue their individual concerns, their satisfaction? Was a process of reorientation, perhaps through teacher training, necessary to indicate alternative sources of satisfaction in teaching?

economies of scale

Mr P C Webb, HMI, was questioned in syndicates about appropriate organisational structures for colleges, particularly after mergers. He said there were potential economies of both scale and development in mergers, even those of colleges some miles apart, in terms of central services, central units and whatever common working was possible. In such cases there was a lot to be said for initially keeping the structures for the merger simple and then for developing central services and more complex structures as the need arose and in a planned, phased sequence. He was questioned also, in one syndicate, about forms of faculty structure and he stressed that if a college had a faculty structure it had to be a reality in working or operational terms; and the faculty head had to have both time and the capacity and inclination to do the job. A faculty structure was a device for generating a middle management structure, but it was not the answer to every kind of difficulty or situation.

traditional
organisations

The fourth witness, Mr G E Wheeler, reminded one syndicate that the reason the conference was concerned with academic structure was a hypothesis that academic structure had an impact upon academic performance. This syndicate was discussing the relationship between gradings of heads of department and college structure, and Mr Wheeler pointed out that different principals and different academic boards would have different views. One might be happy with equal grading for all heads regardless of the size of their departments, another might seek a fit between the activity of the department and its size and grading. This prompted a discussion as to whether it was the role of the academic board to consider organisational structure; the style of management in a college and its articles of government were relevant.

Members are asked to consider, in the light of present trends in the organisation of Further Education, what new college organisational structures will be needed and to evaluate alternative possibilities.

Dr R Bailey,
Principal,
Bournemouth College
of Technology

Introduction to the project

"We have been in a period of continued growth where changes in colleges as organisations have been undertaken in anticipation of continued growth. One question is if the forms of organisation which we have achieved are going to be suitable for a period when such growth may not take place and when changes may be not evolutionary but revolutionary. A variety of factors, economic, political and bureaucratic, may lead us away from the kind of happy evolutionary set-up which we have and which has been largely expansive. One of the objectives of the project is to review the present situation and, if we are in a period of revolutionary change or at least of evolutionary change on a much speeded up time-scale, to see whether these organisations are going to be suitable and to try to identify what forms of organisation are required.

reviewing the present

First, one must look at what one has at the moment, to compare notes and to review our organisations in a more critical light than we would if we were in our own institutions at the present time. Many of the things we say about the effectiveness with which we work and the information which we have are deceptive. In fact, we don't know many of the things which are going on in our own institutions. We should attempt some kind of analysis of what is happening in our institutions and perhaps see if we can modify our views in the light of it.

anticipating the future

Secondly, we should try to identify some of the factors which may be affecting us at the present time or in the future. We must think about the length of time we can anticipate sensibly: it may be one year or five years, and in the case of a five year plan there must be reviews at intervals of time. There are a variety of factors which will affect us in different ways at different times depending on the characteristics of our institutions. For example, if we are in an institution with high loading to OND level there will be factors which will not affect us in the same way if we are in a polytechnic with all work above OND.

identifying the factors

The identification of these factors appears to be extremely important and I have tried to list them as I see them in a framework in four sections. In doing

so I have tried to state them strongly, perhaps overstating them in order to arouse comment. These factors have different levels of probability; some are probable, some possible and some are with us already.

1 Direct economic factors We appear to be moving from a period of expansion into a period of either extremely low economic growth or one in which there is no economic growth at all. The effect would appear to be to restrict college activities in some way, and one needs to examine whether the restriction of activities can be controlled within the framework of the present institutional organisation. We may have an organisation which can cope with a period of expansion but one questions whether it can cope with a period of a lower level of income for the institution which prevents us from doing all that we are doing now. Can the present structure cope with the unpleasant decisions that may have to be made in a period of recession?

2 Manpower planning Lord Crowther Hunt has recently been speaking of manpower planning, and, though its use appears to have a low level of probability in the near future as far as our institutions are concerned, it could well be that at some time in the future some such kind of control will be exercised over the courses or the kind of students we are allowed to teach. Some kind of artificial restriction may be placed upon people who would normally have had a free choice of courses. Can we deal with this situation through our existing organisation?

unexciting times

3 Amalgamation of institutions Some people have thought that the situation when the polytechnics were amalgamated was the same as the one which we face now in amalgamating colleges of education with polytechnics or other FE institutions. It would seem, however, that the factors are very different. The polytechnics were amalgamated in a climate of expansion and excitement. Many of the things which are acceptable to staff, particularly senior staff who held positions of responsibility, were accepted in the light of a flourishing institution which would develop with its designation as a polytechnic. Now one is faced with the problems of amalgamation of institutions at a time which is not exciting for the majority of them. One is having to face reductions in students and at the same time great problems in coping with colleges with different philosophies and disparate views, standards and objectives. It is difficult to devise an organisation to cope with this. One would want to consider it in terms of informal institutions which would assist in breaking down hostilities as well as formal structures of organisation. The question has also been raised as to whether it is sensible to try to establish an institutional ethos where one has two campuses which are distant from one another. Here again it is worth exploring how one does bring about an ethos, if one really believes it is necessary.

unpleasant decisions

4 Reduction in student numbers The other factors, if the views of the DES are correct, concern the reduction in student numbers which we face and the staffing problems related to that.

One has to question the ability of our institutions as structured at present to make the unpleasant decisions. In the past decision-making has been easier because one could look forward to a bigger share of the cake. Are the same

structures suitable for unpleasant decisions? How should one undertake discussions and decisions about those whose aspirations have to be blunted? Is the type of structure which Circular 7/70 gave us in those optimistic days suitable, or can our own internal structures of heads of department and heads of faculty cope? There may have to be a re-examination of the values and abilities of the principal. Is he or should he be willing to make unpleasant decisions without using the committee structures as the appropriate instrument? Can he be relied upon to use the committee structure in a proper way rather than as a shield for his own lack of ability or will?

In the context of staffing, the aspirations and satisfaction which staff experienced in a time of growth may be blunted. How can one capitalise on this in a time of no-growth? What organisations are needed to keep the vitality of staff on some directional lines when they do not have the freedom to develop new courses? Does staff counselling require some kind of formal organisation?

what machinery? How will we cope with redundancy, retraining and redeployment of staff? Is it to be something upon which the principal takes an objective or even subjective judgment? Or is there some kind of organisation to assist at least with information or advice? Will the decision be an authoritarian one by the principal on who should be made redundant, who retrained, who redeployed? Are the principal or his senior staff going to be willing to take these unpleasant decisions rather than hide behind some formal or informal committee structure? Through what machinery do you obtain the accurate information which enables you to make a judgment?

It may be that we shall need to use educational technology on a much more extensive scale if we wish to continue the same level of work on less finance, but if so there is the question of how to change staff attitudes towards it. The answer is not, I'm sure, merely to create an educational technology unit.

measures of success Within this section of the framework the question of student availability has to be raised. I wonder whether existing institutions are capable of coping with the situation when the availability of students is more restricted than previously. Can we change the philosophy of heads of department who have been used to working without constraints and without the restrictions that might be placed upon them? We have been used to seeing size and growth as indicators of the institution's success, and some change in philosophy may be needed to see if we can pay more regard to the expertise of the institution. Is there a need for better organisations to monitor the intake of students to ensure that ideas of size do not continue to dominate to the extent where we take people onto courses who are completely inadequate in order to keep the course viable in terms of numbers?

There is, too, the question of output monitoring. Can we continue to take a pet course which is flourishing and allow it to expand to the point where it becomes ultimately an embarrassment to the institution when a reduction has to be made? One thinks of the explosion of social science courses and of the theory of pulsating growth in which subjects become popular for a while. Probably at the moment it is in accountancy which has become popular because there appeared to be a shortage of accountants and in which courses have been

established to the point where the number of accountants has increased to fill the vacant posts. But, have we the will or the organisation to limit our heads of department who still see growth as an end in itself? It is the output which should place the restriction on the input.

open access One of the particularly fashionable things is the open access institution. This raises many problems, particularly in attitudes. Can you adapt the institutions? What kind of re-examination of values is necessary in the institution? Can you re-educate staff to accept the open access system?

Another group of factors under this heading is the bureaucratic pressures, from DES and LEA. The question is whether we are willing to accommodate them and try to use them to our advantage. In times of economic pressure there is a tendency for the centralisation of power because it is assumed to be more economic to dole resources out from a central area. This is likely to develop and can already be seen happening where now authorities insist on reviewing any new post before advertising it even though they know full well somebody is needed. One must examine whether it is advantageous for the activities of the college. If it is done, whether we think it is right or not, I would question whether we have the right organisation to accept this change in the strength of the bureaucracy. Where there are a number of institutions in an authority they become competitive for funds. We have tended to keep the education office out of our affairs within the institution. Would we need to amend our administration to make it much more amenable to the involvement of the LEA in its affairs?

departmental structures Other factors must concern whether the departmental or faculty organisations are outmoded. We have heard talk at this conference of matrices which cross the boundaries of departments. In view of the pressures, including those of TEC and BEC, one questions whether the department is the right structure for the future. It has been an extremely convenient form of internal organisation but it may be modified or even destroyed by forcing on it some system of TEC in which courses require resources from different parts of the institution.

The last point is this: we have many of us paid lip-service to the idea of our involvement with the community when in fact we have not been involved in any meaningful sense other than in providing courses for it. In the light of ideas of l'education permanente, continuing education or recurrent education, do the attitudes and philosophies of our institutions need to be amended in some way to cope with these changed needs which the community appears to have?"

Witness Session II

Three witnesses joined the syndicates to assist in their discussions of the project: Mr J L Davies, Head of Department of Management in the Public Services, Anglian Regional Management Centre, Mr F J Janes, Principal, Yeovil College, Mr D J Liston, Pro-Rector, The Polytechnic of Central London.

Mr Davies was questioned in syndicate about the forms of organisation that would be appropriate for the changes envisaged by the different syndicates. If, as one syndicate suggested, teaching strategies had to be radically altered, it might be necessary to think of different types of teachers, one the star lecturer in front of a very large group, another the person who could work with a small group, or who could go from student to student over a long period. A crucial problem was whether the organisation had any means of identifying the strengths and weaknesses of staff. He described course evaluation and staff appointment procedures in his institution. He reminded one syndicate that the capacities of people in FE to resist change were exceedingly well-developed.

tertiary college

Mr Janes described the organisation of Yeovil College, a tertiary college, which he stressed was a new form of comprehensive institution for the 16-19 age group. The traditional technical college departmental structure would not have been appropriate. Staff were arranged in 15 teaching schools each under a Head of School responsible for deploying his teachers and managing his resources, but responsibility for courses and students was assumed by four deans. Teachers acted also as personal tutors and in this role were responsible to the deans. Deans were all established as Grade IV heads of department and the heads of schools were senior lecturers or lecturers Grade II. (The college comprised 550 full-time students, 2,000 part-time day and 2,500 evening). The new structure had, Mr Janes believed, influenced the attitudes of staff in that deans no longer saw themselves in the traditional head of department role of building up student numbers in their own departments and in that heads of schools concentrated on trying to improve teaching. The college had an academic board, of which the principal was chairman, because, Mr Janes commented, it allowed him to maintain his leading position in the college whilst he was able to accept that sometimes he would be outvoted. The academic board laid down policy guidelines.

interdisciplinary courses

Mr Liston said that he had been appointed pro-rector of the Polytechnic of Central London because the Governors had wanted a member of the directorate from outside education. He commented to one syndicate that open access to colleges would have widespread implications, encouraging interdisciplinary courses and many more options across disciplines. Many of the conventional courses and disciplines would have to be reconsidered, and it would have to be accepted that it was not necessarily desirable that an entire course should be integrated. Such changes would have implications for principals and staff because it would affect the boundaries of their authority. The Polytechnic of Central London no longer had heads of department but heads of areas and heads of schools. Each school had a school board which included members of other related schools. The directorate tried to pass its authority over to the leadership of the schools.

Syndicate Reports on Project

One syndicate concentrated on mergers of colleges and identified four areas of problems: communications and gathering information; decision making;

structures; staffing. Difficulties could arise in interpreting and channelling information because of the different traditions of the colleges and the personalities, but some of the difficulties could be alleviated by the appointment of a person to be responsible for collection and analysis of information and by the central storage of information with appropriate access. Decision-making structures should define areas of responsibility and terms of reference for working groups and directorates. Ad hoc working groups were valuable; it was unwise to set up too many standing committees. Structures should promote educational aims and objectives, rather than conform to an overall stereotype, should be capable of change and should be able to be understood clearly. Centralisation should be restricted to those activities which could demonstrate advantages, but there was also a need to guard against outposts feeling abandoned and lacking identity with the college.

overcoming constraints

Other syndicates looked at the changes outlined by the speakers and the ways in which colleges could adapt to them. One suggested that constraints of finance, buildings and staff could be overcome: increase income by TOPS and short courses; maximise room utilisation; rationalise between colleges; reduce course contact hours where possible; reduce choice of subjects offered; consider modular courses; introduce resource-based learning techniques. Where areas were overstaffed such measures could be undertaken as not replacing retiring staff, reducing part-time staff, redeploying, retraining, seconding to industry, encouraging early retirement and providing reasonable compensation for redundancy. Another syndicate accepted the projection of very low, zero or negative growth but thought on the whole that it would not result in fundamental changes in college management. There would be changes in outlook and attitude and a need to improve quality and deployment of resources. Improvements in diagnostic techniques for students and their courses, in information services and in planning and forecasting would need to be examined. There should be more market research.

Another syndicate saw the most likely development as that of open access to colleges and the spread of centrally produced learning materials like those of the Open University. These developments would raise problems of centralisation and authoritarianism over local and academic control, and the possibility that the teacher's role would be devalued to that of a technician.

Syndicates examined college structures. One noted that the departmental structure had stood the test of time and responded to change and therefore thought that it was appropriate to the short-term future. Another listed its disadvantages as including the difficulties of adjusting to changing demands and to interdisciplinary and modular courses and suggested that departmental goals might conflict with college goals and departments might identify too much with disciplines. The empire-building characteristic of departments had advantages and disadvantages: it encouraged departments to attract students but staff salaries depended on student numbers and grades.

untidy structures

One syndicate thought that the matrix structure could have advantages in staff deployment where there was a common core of studies, but could give rise to serious problems of communication and identity. Another reckoned that the problems of the matrix got worse as it got larger. The faculty structure had

advantages in terms of breaking down subject barriers, rationalisation and managing small departments. Another syndicate stressed that the structure must be flexible and that one should expect untidiness in a developing institution.

Change, said one syndicate, should be carried through a series of small steps rather than a single large step so that at each stage the change could be monitored and corrected if necessary.

Professor R E Thomas,
School of
Management,
Bath University

Response to Syndicate Reports

"If I am looking at any organisation - an industrial organisation, a college, a hospital - I ask myself what are the objectives and how are they determined, and much of the discussion this morning has represented different views about how the objectives of different part of the educational system are arrived at. The public services tend to determine their own objectives, and the professional lobby in education - and more so in health - is immensely strong. We have to ask therefore the question of how far the objectives of colleges are close to or distant from one's perception of the needs of society. In this country there has been a tradition of emphasising education for living without worrying about whether we can earn our living.

the crunch As the syndicate reports recognised, we have now come close to a crunch situation in the imminent cuts in public expenditure and the drastic reappraisal of priorities by Government and society. It may well be that a new range of opportunities and needs are presented. In industrial, economic, managerial terms we are about the most illiterate country in north-west Europe, and our poor performance as a country may be related to deficiencies in our educational provision and attitudes to education. We have to ask questions about the ethos of institutions now evolving and about how far they meet what people express as demand and what are real needs. Do they see themselves as traditional teaching establishments or have there got to be changes in their roles in adult education?

In this context we have to look at the teacher as a resource. Teachers are an expensive resource, and if there are problems of priorities then their cost effectiveness has to be looked at. I am worried by the confusion and inconsistencies in the constraints exercised currently and the wastes which they bring about. We need a more rational view of resource allocation, not the compartmentalisation of equipment, academic costs and other costs.

diseconomies of scale

I am worried about the incredible units we are building up by mergers, especially paper mergers. All the evidence from other fields of activity is that economies of scale are gravely overestimated. The diseconomies of scale in terms of the involvement of people and the problems of management are so critical that we have to revise our thinking on industrial organisation. Yet industrial organisations are handling a simpler problem than colleges. Colleges do not have a controllable raw material or specified parameters but deal with a volatile, highly variable material with a multitude

of processes to be performed upon it and a production control problem that would drive an industrial organisation like British Leyland bonkers.

Moreover, study of the processes of merger in industry shows that mergers are long and complex processes which do not yield quick economies. Very few of the mergers of the 1960s in industry have paid off.

management of
subsidiaries

There is a grave danger in education of being besotted by size. I am glad that in universities we are not as individuals paid according to student numbers. I entirely agree with the view taken at Bath University that we would not want it to grow very much more because of the managerial and behavioural problems of size. I would challenge the basic assumptions in the growth of enormous units. What we are going to produce is holding companies called colleges with subsidiary companies called faculties or departments, and what we have to learn is how to run the institutions like big industrial groups. We have, like investment bankers, to invest resources in subsidiary units and to devise means of enabling these separate units to work within certain parameters, to be given resources and to learn to manage these resources themselves. The danger is that we repeat the failings of industrial organisations like British Leyland and attempt to run an enormous complex as though it was a small shop. How many colleges attempt to run themselves from the centre as if they were a single uniform mass production firm? Perhaps they create some corporate centre called a directorate but the essence of the operation should be to try and find means of delegation and of handling autonomous subsidiary enterprises, each with its own entrepreneurs initiating activities.

Having made these points, I want to consider two aspects of the problems of running these institutions. First, there is the organisational problem that the traditional grouping has been the subject department but that the pressure operationally is to move towards a matrix. Operations can no longer be adequately led at all times from the centre and various groupings and mixtures of people may be required. However, superimposed upon the variants of the matrix structure has been a separate process, that of the formal participative process. Such a process makes it more necessary and difficult to define roles for people because they get involved in some peculiar changes of role. In going over to more democratic processes, how far have we thought through the full implications? We are embarking on an extremely complex social process and if there is not a careful and tight definition of people's roles it will degenerate into anarchy.

resource allocation

Secondly, there is the pressure of economic events. What is the appropriate method of resource allocation? The dilemma for academic institutions is that in the past they have had tight - sometimes mysterious - systems of resource allocation controlled by the principal. Now responsibility for academic matters has been passed to democratic bodies without passing on to them any real influence or comment on the allocation of resources. Thus two systems are established, one which deliberates academic issues and another the money without which the academic programmes cannot take place. In the constitutions of educational institutions the responsibility for finance is usually vested in a partly or mainly lay body. How do you balance the course-directing, student-oriented mechanisms with the mechanisms for financial control?

I am delighted that one of the syndicates said that an effective, living organisation would be untidy. We have those unfortunate beings who are always trying to tidy up organisations in order that they look like nice charts and graveyards. An organisation that is effective is bound to be untidy because it is changing.

information
and policy

A whole series of questions were raised by syndicates in their reports and I would like now to comment on just a few of them. First, the problem was raised of knowing where responsibility for a particular decision lies and when the decision has been taken. The more we get involved in academic and collegiate boards the more we have to combine with them some strong executive system which gives a clear leadership and support. Mention was made of directorates but we have to think carefully about the role of these central staff functions. There is a need for people to collect data and keep it up to date so that we have the information on which to base decisions. You must establish the relationship between the data-gatherers and the policy-deciders. The data-gatherers can become very influential on policy. I am surprised that no-one brought up the problem of the division of function between you as administrators on academic salaries and the general administrators assisting you. What staff support is necessary for effective administration, and how is it to be dispersed through the institution?

Another syndicate made a good point about the complexity and time-consuming nature of all the consultative processes that a matrix system can lead to if it is carried on at too large a scale. The distinction was also drawn between contingency and long-term planning. A lot of the planning we do in education has been contingency planning forced upon us by events. It is still worth doing long-term planning, and in doing so you know your starting point and can update it each year. At least it saves you from over-reacting to short-term problems.

quality

We need to consider who the client is. Sometimes it is the students; sometimes the employing organisation; but in resource terms it is the State because of the judgments it makes about priorities and the resources it makes available. I was interested too in the question about the balance between the centre and local units. We live in a hierarchical society and education perpetuates this. I admit to being an elitist and to being all for having high quality institutions. However, I am worried about the attempts to predetermine the elites by administrative fiat. In management studies, for example, there are polytechnics I sometimes feel like shutting down and local colleges I would elevate to higher status. Not all polytechnics are equal; not all universities are equal; there are pecking orders which we recognise, and these pecking orders are the result of allowing delegation. Very few attempts to create by fiat an elite have worked. Somehow we have to allow for the divergence between institutions and within them. Diversity is going to be more constructive."

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"My general impression of the historical division stemming from the 1944 Act and beyond between further education and schools is that it has been maintained by a considerable, if not unbelievable, degree of ignorance that has, over the years, persisted between schools and colleges. This is typical of any service that is compartmentalised and we have suffered from this traditionally in the Education Service as far as all sectors are concerned including schools, further education colleges, adult education, youth service, in-service training and so on.

growing awareness

Happily, progress has been made over the years and great improvements are evident in the last five or six. One headmaster, to whom I was talking recently, who is now in a position to achieve much greater understanding, said to me that although there is very much a growing acceptance of each other's validity he would simply re-state that considerable ignorance still persists between schools and further education together with the prejudices which feed on that ignorance. So the growing awareness of each other's work and achievements is a very real step forward but there is still a long way to go and many people in schools, further education, and even in educational administration, are guilty of an insular approach to the rest of the service. Traditionally, in further education, one of the underlying reasons for the difficulty in relationships between schools and colleges has been, and is, the direct competition between them for 16+ students. Quite often, at an official level, there can be remarkably good relationships. For example, heads, principals, deputies, heads of departments, careers teachers and tutors may well from time to time visit each other and have established working contacts. This has not, however, often in my experience been reflected throughout the staff rooms on both sides. Even now there can still be a considerable element of suspicion of empire building on both sides and indeed you do not need me to point out to you the empire building image of principals of technical colleges as a result of the enormous expansion of colleges during the last fifteen years.

In the direct competition situation between sixth forms, particularly in grammar schools and now in many comprehensives, there is a feeling that colleges are not really academically orientated but merely lower level vocational training establishments. On the part of the colleges, I often hear, mirrored in a significant part of public opinion and in the press, criticism of secondary schools as far as the relevance of the curriculum is concerned, discipline, attitudes of young people, and the remoteness of life in the latter years at school with the reality of the world outside once youngsters leave,

particularly at 16.

It is, therefore, stating the obvious to you, I am sure, when I emphasise that there is a real need for schools and colleges to find out much more about each other in a meaningful way.

In what I am going to go on to say I am restricting myself to the policy issues between schools and colleges where the college concerned has a very real stake in the 16-19 age group. I do not propose to talk about the polytechnics as this seems to me to be another subject as part of higher education generally.

The present situation in Somerset

It is tempting to say that for Somerset the war is won, there are merely a few spasmodic skirmishes which require attention. This is not exactly the case as there is still room for considerable improvement. Nevertheless, there is a strong ring of truth about it because of the adoption several years ago now of the concept of a tertiary college. This was not so much the impetus from the further education side but the need to consider secondary school re-organisation in areas of the county taking into account local circumstances and national trends.

tertiary colleges The adoption of 11-16 schools and the 16+ comprehensive tertiary college in three areas of Somerset has, of course, fundamentally affected the relationship between schools and colleges. Except in one or two parts of those three areas, there is no longer competition for 16+ students and as all students move forward at 16, if they wish to receive any kind of education - academic, technical, full-time or part-time - to the one college, there is a real change of attitude amongst the staffs of both sectors for closer understanding and co-operation.

In other areas where we have a more traditional arrangement, there are, of course, good relationships which, I am sure, are typical of many other similar situations up and down the country. These include informal visits to headmasters, specialist teachers and careers advisers in schools by principals, vice-principals, heads of department and other senior staff in the colleges. The college staff will attend school careers evenings as well as talking to parent/teacher associations. Linked courses, about which I will have more to say later on, of course establish a very real two-way traffic at 'grass roots' level. Having said all that, however close the relationship may be with some schools, there is still, although it is improving, a basic suspicion of college empire building by sixth forms in grammar and emerging 11-18 comprehensive schools. There is, too, a feeling in these schools that academic standards are higher in their own sixth forms than in the college (and so they ought to be in some ways!)

In the three tertiary college areas with competition removed, the need for the closest co-operation was apparent to all involved during the re-organisation process before the tertiary colleges opened. The authority, in its wisdom, set up a Heads Advisory Group in each area which consisted of the heads of the schools and the principal as well as Teacher Advisory Groups representing the

staffs of all the institutions involved in the re-organisation. These, of course, had specific briefs in helping to implement the comprehensive re-organisation scheme. As a result of this, contact and co-operation were built in from the start.

In similar situations in some other areas particularly in Barnstaple (described by Mr Lineham of North Devon College during the witness sessions) the academic organisation of the whole re-organisation area has been formalised into some kind of academic board structure involving the tertiary college and the feeder schools. In Somerset, this was rejected as it was felt it would create an unnecessary administrative structure. It was left therefore, in the absence now of competition and with the process having started during re-organisation, for local initiative to decide what suited them best in the way of on-going meetings and co-operation on curriculum, administrative and other matters of mutual concern. In all three areas, the heads of the 11-16 schools and the principal of the college meet on a regular basis; for example, in one it is once a term, in another it is every month. In this particular one, it is called by its members a Senior Academic Board but this is their title and their informal way of describing it. In the early days of re-organisation, there were the immediate problems of agreeing GCE examination boards and other related matters.

liaison This was crucial in the changeover period and together with the need for continuity particularly between academic subjects in the 11-16 schools and the same subjects in the college, meetings of subject staff were set up. In one area, these remain on a regular basis exploring matters of mutual concern, in another they meet approximately on an annual basis, and in the third the feeling is that they have now created close relationships on an individual basis between staff and their initial remit of considering the problems of going comprehensive and choosing examination boards having been met, they now meet only on a very occasional basis when the need arises. It is early days, however, and in all three of the tertiary college areas, liaison between subject teachers is still very much in a transitional stage. The role of the teachers' centre has begun to take over the initiative here particularly in one area; it certainly has a role to play and this is developing.

All colleges either have one senior person with special responsibility for liaising with schools or they share this among three or four senior staff. In one area, too, there are regular informal meetings of deputy heads and the vice-principal.

staff relationships The strong impression I have therefore at this stage in the tertiary college situation more than any other is that relationships are excellent and close though in many cases this is rightly and inevitably also to do with the personalities involved. College staff are in and out of schools on a much more regular basis, though to a lesser extent do school staff get into colleges. Recruitment, selection and the co-ordination of courses bring about the closest co-operation. There have, of course, been teething troubles and there are still many problems. There is still some anxiety about the dominance of the tertiary college in relation to the 11-16 schools though this is not as great as many schools first feared, thanks largely to the approach of the colleges themselves. The whole process of communication is naturally difficult where a group of individual institutions is

involved. With college staff frequently in schools discussing various problems, individual opinions of a particular specialist lecturer are often interpreted as the college policy. The college has to go out of its way to avoid giving the impression that it is dictating to schools but at least the heads and the principal and senior staff are concerned to dispel this wherever they find such an impression amongst the staff. As curriculum planning is properly the responsibility of academic boards, there is the problem of relationships between those boards and meetings of subject teachers. This is still to be worked out. Certainly one suggestion has been that there might even be common membership sometime in the future of the academic board. Certainly the transmission of ideas from meetings of teachers in tertiary college area to principals, heads and the academic board of the college is an area for further study and development, bearing in mind the need for flexibility. The exchange of information between the schools and the college is very much better than it used to be. The general agreement about the break at 16 and the need to emphasise a different stage of a student's career starts when he goes to college. The relationships which do exist now would permit even greater flexibility but sometimes the law acts as a constraint as long as we maintain nationally separate schools and further education regulations with the overlap for the 16-19 age group. For example, there is the problem of the exceptionally gifted children who might benefit from going to the college before they are 16.

In one part of Somerset, an administrative accident, which is perhaps the best way of describing it, under local government re-organisation left us with one small half of a technical college. This is now part of a 13-18 comprehensive school and, although legally they are run as separate institutions under the two sets of regulations, they have one Principal/Head in charge and as far as legal constraints, the Burnham reports and other administrative arrangements will allow, they are being run as one unique kind of institution. Inevitably goodwill is essential on the part of all concerned and although it has, in fact, happened by accident, it is a unique example and shows great potential for the future as far as the integration of a large school and a further education college are concerned together incidentally with a large community and sports complex. With only one traditional further education college left in Somerset - and one that has developed good relationships with schools - with three tertiary colleges and another being integrated with a school, the situation has changed radically and the overall climate surrounding schools and colleges is much more supportive and less of an issue.

The Policy Issues

Perhaps now I can turn more directly to the policy issues, having given you some background of the general situation in Somerset.

absurd barrier Linked courses There is so much that one could say about linked courses but you will be looking into this in much more detail during your project work and in the witness sessions. Perhaps I ought to say first of all however that I agree with the statement made in "Education" (6 June 1975) by J R Rudling, Head of Engineering at Newcastle under Lyme. He says: "The greatest

value of link courses in my opinion is the opportunity they give to bridge the absurd barrier which has existed between the further and secondary sectors in so many cases for such a long time".

Although linked courses have been operating for a good number of years, perhaps the main impetus has come nationally with the raising of the school leaving age coinciding, as Rudling points out, with slack in the colleges as a result of the employment situation. The volume of linked course work has thus grown so rapidly and not basically for educational reasons, that we now need to be asking certain questions. Perhaps I could summarise my impressions under three headings.

Aims and objectives There seems to be a confusion between those involved in linked courses as to what they are aiming to do. In schools often they are seen quite differently from the way the college sees them. I recently attended a conference of all those involved in linked courses from both schools and colleges and there were almost as many different aims and objectives as there were people at the conference. The result of this, of course, is a wide variety of problems as teachers both from within one institution as well as from separate institutions have quite different expectations about the aims, the organisation, the curriculum content and the value of linked courses. This of course leads on to my second impression.

Communication problems Although meetings are held in different college areas concerning linked courses from time to time, there does seem to me to be very much a problem of communication on a day-to-day basis between staffs of institutions where they are working jointly with the same young people. This would be the case even if all were clearer about their aims and objectives. It is, of course, made much worse as a result. I was amused at a discussion recently on linked courses particularly when the point was being made that not just ROSLA children should go on linked courses. Pleas were being made for all the ability range to have the opportunity of courses of this kind. One further education lecturer shouted up in traditional further education open door style 'So long as they are warm and walking, we'll have 'em'. It is true quite often that proper understanding on a day-to-day basis between college and school teachers can be lacking.

economic climate

Priorities and resources I was struck at the same conference by the general lack of awareness about the need to establish priorities in the present stringent economic climate. There seems to be an enthusiastic demand for interpreting the idea of linked courses in the wildest possible way without any attempt to consider which kind, if indeed any, of these linked courses are of real benefit to young people and in what way. The cost of providing linked courses can no longer be ignored and, although some authorities have solved the internal problem of the subsidy to schools staffing by further education, in colleges where this is not the case and the pressure for resources is clearly on, linked courses are likely to be curtailed. The Principal and his academic board may have to decide that their continued provision is low on the priority list. In a period not only of nil growth in the education budget but perhaps even more serious cutbacks in the coming year, colleges and schools will have to be much clearer about the value of particular types of linked courses for

them to survive at all.

The careers service In any discussion about the links between colleges and schools, a prominent feature must be the careers service, especially as it is not only concerned with careers guidance but also now educational guidance. In Somerset, in common with most other LEAs in the South West, we have, since 1st April, 1974, established under the 1973 Act our own careers service. Although only eighteen months old in Somerset I see this service making a very big contribution in bridging the gap between schools and colleges. We have established area careers offices and each of these, apart from one, is based on the campus of the further education college and certainly on all three tertiary college sites. Although there is an area careers officer responsible for a defined geographical area, with specialised staff who link closely with the further education institutions, all are in and out of schools and colleges very frequently. Although we have had 16+ guidance schemes established in most parts of Somerset attempting to help young people in their fourth and fifth years at school and their parents to be fully aware of the alternative courses and opportunities available to them, the careers service with its independence, its impartiality and its professional expertise has considerably strengthened the advice and information that identifies for young people the alternatives available to them and their parents. The fact that these careers officers spend a very high proportion of their time in the schools and colleges means that they are able to foster links between the two staffs and have indeed acted on occasions as a go-between. There is the danger that the careers officer may be regarded as a schools liaison officer by the college on the one hand and an advocate of the further education college on the other (particularly as his office is on that campus) but the awareness of these dangers and the strengthening of the links with careers teachers in schools and colleges is, however, helping to maintain the objectivity of the careers officer. There is, however, much room for development as the service is only eighteen months old.

Perhaps I could canter now fairly quickly through several other policy issues.

Entry procedures to colleges Though bound up with the careers service and any 16+ guidance schemes, this is an area that requires constant attention between staffs of the two sectors if the young people are to understand the full opportunities available to them. With a developing careers service and the break at 16, for Somerset it is much less of a problem, but where 11-18 schools are in competition with the college and certainly where grammar schools still operate, there is need for continuous effort to ensure that young people do not just go into the sixth form when suitable OND and other courses available in further education colleges might suit them better. There are a variety of 16+ guidance schemes around the country that try to combat this one with varying degrees of success.

TEC and BEC Curriculum and courses Further education colleges have changed rapidly in recent years and one often wonders whether the staff in schools either know or are sympathetic to the opportunities that are available in the colleges. Close staff liaison in allied subject areas as well as through the careers service and the college entrance procedures are very necessary here. This whole area

though however is approaching something of a turmoil as although curriculum development hit the schools a long time ago now such changes as the Technician Education Council and the Business Education Council are likely to do for the colleges what the Schools Council has done for the schools. With all the change that is taking place likely to gain tremendous impetus there is a greater need for closer co-operation with schools to keep them in touch and help them understand what is happening.

CEE et alia The controversy surrounding the Certificate of Extended Education is not part of my remit. Sufficient is it for me to say that I am far from happy by the relentless move on the part of the examinations board and the Schools Council towards the CEE. I am not convinced that there is a need for it, let alone whether we can afford it in the present economic climate. If it does come, then the separate development of CEE type courses in further education under UEI, City and Guilds, and so on is a nonsense. Certainly this is going to affect the competition between sixth forms and colleges unless some clear thinking emerges and I do not see evidence of it at the moment.

Sixth form schools and further education colleges Where, with the break of 16 instead of a tertiary approach a sixth form college or school is set up in addition to the existing technical college, then there is the whole area of overlap of courses, 16+ guidance for youngsters and the relationship between the two institutions to be determined. There are examples of two such institutions working together very much as one junior college in two halves, there are others where an agreed matrix timetable for 'A' level courses operates, and there are still others where polite and friendly discussions take place with some limited degree of co-operation. There are many ways perhaps in which this situation can develop. In Taunton we shall be facing this one shortly as we are planning a sixth form school but there is a great deal of thinking still to do. It does bring in the more difficult triangle of relationships between the 11-16 schools, the sixth form schools and the technical college which is a further complication in trying to bridge the gap between schools and further education.

Sharing of resources The whole question of expensive equipment and resources is something which will need consideration more and more in any particular locality between the variety of schools and further education institutions that work side by side. It may be perhaps that the colleges can provide some services for surrounding schools, particularly, for example, in the whole area of computer education and the use they can offer of their terminals. It may be that other resources from the college can be offered to schools. Such expensive equipment as video tape recorders and television studios will certainly have to be shared more and more, and co-operation along these lines is obvious though not always apparent.

sharing teachers Specialist staff Where there are shortages of specialist staff such as language teachers at the moment, then consideration may have to be given between the college and the secondary schools perhaps sharing one or two teachers. The languages issue is a particular one for us in an area of Somerset at the moment. It is obviously important that more than one language is offered in the 11-16 schools though not all of them can get the second specialist.

There are problems about shared staff. We set out in Somerset with the possibility for providing these where necessary in our tertiary areas and we have one or two very limited examples but they are not popular either with the schools or with the colleges and there are in-built difficulties.

Another area for co-operation though between specialist staffing is using the colleges, quite often because they are in the centres of the main urban areas, as a base for area advisory teachers in specialist subjects such as music and drama. In Somerset at the moment we have three tutor-advisers in music who do some teaching in the college but who have an advisory liaison role with primary and secondary schools in the area and in fostering music amongst the community at large. Slightly different arrangements have also developed in drama. There are perhaps other opportunities here that need exploring. One of the most successful innovations recently in Somerset has been the development of Saturday morning music schools which these tutor-advisers have set up, usually in college premises (though one takes place in a school), where instrumental and orchestral playing, music workshop, classical guitar, opera, choral work are all fostered with youngsters from primary school age upwards. For youngsters learning individual instruments, this is a tremendous encouragement to have orchestral and group opportunities for playing, particularly when many schools cannot provide this. Drama and other opportunities are also developing along the Saturday morning concept.

Community education Most further education colleges would regard themselves as community colleges because of their adult education and extra-mural work. Wherever community education (whatever that precisely means) is developing and there are certainly signs of a growth of this in one form or another through the country despite on the other hand some criticisms, there will be issues of overlap and competition between a college and the local surrounding community schools. One would hope there would be as much co-operation as possible but past experience does not always suggest this. No doubt you can take this issue up with Mr Harvey during the witness sessions to see how Leicestershire have, or have not, slotted their colleges into the community ideal. Certainly within this whole area there is a need to rationalise library resources and make them fully available to the public, use of sports halls, playing fields, theatre workshop, art exhibition rooms and the full physical facilities as well as staffing resources in the college and in the schools.

pastoral guidance

In-service training of staff I have always found it difficult to accept that the training needs of further education should be dealt with quite separately to those of the schools and I do not think the views of educational administrators and their practices have helped here. One of the tremendous advantages of an overall in-service training programme in consultation with teachers of all kinds is not only the savings in resources through eradicating duplication but also the contact between teachers from different sectors of the service and the value that this has in the study that they are undertaking. There will indeed be separate specialist needs but a good deal of our in-service education provides common elements for those on both sides of the fence. One good example is the whole area of training in personal guidance and pastoral care for teachers in schools and colleges. The one

year part-time courses that we run in Somerset in an integrated way for teachers in schools, further education and youth workers have produced the reaction from those who have been through them that one of their strengths is the broadening effect of the different views that come forward from school teachers, further education lecturers and youth leaders who work in very different situations. Not only that but links for future close co-operation are established and these follow on into the schools, youth centres and colleges in particular areas. Indeed as a result we now have Area Seminar and discussion groups to enable people involved in personal guidance and pastoral care work to get together so that local youth workers, teachers, college lecturers, educational psychologists, social workers, and the like know each other and study case problems. Much more I am sure could be done in the whole area of in-service training.

Teachers' centres This is really part of the same issue and I am sure there are examples of further education on teachers being fully involved in many teachers' centres. Nevertheless, simply because of the number of school teachers, teachers' centres tend to look towards the schools much more than they do towards further education for their main 'bread and butter' work. However, teachers' centres can be very much a bridge and a focal point between colleges and schools and can help to bring about a better understanding. They are a common meeting ground if colleges use them.

work preparation

Links with special schools This is an area which has come to the fore much more in further education circles in the last year or two. It does seem to me it requires a lot more attention. In colleges, and indeed in secondary schools amongst teachers, it is understandable that there is naturally enough a considerable degree of ignorance about the different kinds of categories of youngsters and their needs in special schools. One thing there certainly ought to be much more of and that is carefully thought out and designed linked courses in the last two years between special schools and further education colleges to help prepare some of them for employment. I am sure, too, there is a need for some arrangements for youngsters leaving special schools at 16 to have an extra year in a further education college with some special provision to help them prepare themselves to hold down a job if they are perhaps not in a position to do so at 16. Several units of this kind are now appearing in colleges up and down the country. We are in the process of setting one up in Somerset. The total absence of links between special schools and further education colleges in the past is a very important factor which requires considerable thought and discussion.

Special needs of rural schools Some secondary schools which can be anything up to 80 to 100 miles return journey away from a technical college, naturally enough wish to provide some basic vocational courses in their own school and, though it is not possible despite their claim to provide OND and similar courses, it is a problem area that is perhaps not best solved by coming down on one side or the other. Legal regulations at the moment prevent any real compromise but one hopes that special needs of this kind will not escape attention nor necessarily create unproductive suspicion on the part of schools or colleges.

representation Governing bodies Many colleges do have a representative of secondary schools in general, or all of them, on their governing bodies. Certainly in our tertiary college areas we have one representative from each of the contributing schools and this has so far proved to be very helpful in creating links at that level. There is a whole process that needs to be kept continually under review in helping the public at large to understand the progress through the educational system for the adolescent. This is only one small step in that direction. More thought needs to be given to others.

Academic boards Should academic boards have closer and perhaps constitutional links with local schools and particularly those that send youngsters to the college? I have alluded to this earlier in my talk and no doubt there will be considerable disagreement here but it should not be dismissed without further thought.

Youth work In looking at the school/college divide, I would make a plea not to forget the youth service and the important part that it can play particularly as much valuable youth work is now based on schools and much of the extra curricular work as well as student union work which our colleges undertake, though not called youth work, is just that. In helping to create a caring community for adolescents, there is need for wider co-operation than across schools and colleges. The informal tradition and expertise in social education of youth workers can make a very valuable contribution.

Unemployment of young people Finally, there will be issues from time to time which are of great importance for a short period to those involved in both schools and colleges and of course the possibility for serious unemployment of those in the 16-19 age bracket particularly the school leavers, is a very serious one at the moment. No doubt further education colleges and national intervention will help but close co-operation on this issue is of paramount importance.

The attitude of the LEA

Finally, in looking at the issues between schools and colleges, the attitude of the education committee, the chief education officer, his senior colleagues and advisers are to say the least significant. To what extent does the authority and its senior administrators determine and influence issues of this kind? As far as the committee is concerned, it is important how the committee system is structured as this can either help or deter the division between schools and colleges. I don't think I want to say much here about whether radical corporate management, in the way some authorities have adopted it, is likely to provide a better climate for co-operation between sectors of the service than a corporate approach within separate schools and further education sub-committees. It is true to say, however, that members are usually very outspoken when they come across obvious examples of non-co-operation between parts of the education service. The blinkered approach stands out to those who see the service as a whole.

working as a team The chief education officer and his colleagues by their attitudes and approaches and the style of administration, do affect the policy issues in a

variety of ways. First the administrative structure within the department can set a context in which many of the difficulty policy issues are tackled positively and therefore disappear, or it can slow down the process of producing proper answers. Is there any corporate approach between senior officers? Does the senior schools education officer and the further education senior education officer obviously work closely as part of a team, or do they work in separate compartments with occasional meetings? However this operates, it is clear that heads of schools and principals of colleges can easily detect what happens in practice. Is the education service administered as a whole and seen as such by the chief education officer and his colleagues or is it obviously run as several fairly separate sectors apart from some obvious issues which generally affect the service?

There are ways in which a lead can be taken here in setting the right climate. For example, all advisers, particularly all specialist advisers, should be available, and seen to be available, to the whole service and not just to schools. There are authorities where advisers have a brief only to work in schools and this I cannot understand. Even general advisers in further education will need to work closely with general advisers in schools. As well as domestic sessions of heads getting together with officers on the schools side and principals separately on the further education side, an annual or occasional conference of all heads of institutions to discuss with the chief education officer major issues of concern to the whole education service is very helpful. The in-service training programme of an authority should be one overall programme and run as such. Support services should be freely available to colleges as well as schools - museums service, science and technology unit, the same grants for foreign visits for students from colleges as well as schools, the same pupil/student transport arrangements, automatic minor awards should be available in colleges for the under 19s, consistent consultations with all teacher associations at county level, separate meetings with different associations covering particular sectors of the service should only take place in the context of the overall consultation.

Much of this trend was firmly operating in Somerset before tertiary colleges were established but the pace has been quickened since that time.

circular 7/70 Secondly, advisers and education officers (and their roles, I find, are now often blurred) do take direct initiatives and act as catalysts in both further education and schools. Our 16+ guidance scheme is a particular example here. They should also maintain personal direct liaison with all governing bodies in both schools and further education. There is, however, the whole problem of Circular 7/70 and how it is working. Does it, and indeed should it, mean full independence for the colleges? Where does the chief education officer stand in relation to instrument and articles of government? Colleges are not independent. They are part of the education service as a whole. Certainly under Circular 7/70 they have more freedom for individual and local initiative and more institutional responsibility but they are not, as some seem to think, independent. The style therefore of the chief education officer and his colleagues, in my view, should be positive in creating a partnership with the colleges and must often stand firm on many issues in view of the chief education officer's overall respon-

sibility to the education committee for the policy of the service as a whole.

Conclusion

In conclusion, may I sum up by re-stating the need for closer understanding between schools and colleges. I have skated over seventeen policy issues, some minor and some major, the latter do require considerably more thought and initiative if effective opportunities are to be provided for, and made known to, the 16-19 age group in particular. Where tertiary colleges are established with the firm break of 16, then indeed the real gap between schools and colleges disappears leaving only particular problems to be looked at from time to time. Is this where the changes are likely to go for the 16-19 age group in the next twenty years and beyond?"

"It is by no means new for colleges to establish and maintain contacts with various outside agencies. We often hear the charge that education is something of an ivory tower and perhaps there might be elements of the education service for which that charge might have had some validity, at least in the past. Maybe some schools have tended to be self-contained communities and some universities have traditionally been places where people concentrated purely on their own learning activities in their own communities. But this is no longer the case today and indeed it was never true for the colleges of further education. Right from their inception they have been heavily involved in the community and their students have been drawn from young people actively involved in that community and earning their living in it. The students have come into college for courses which had specific relevance to what they were doing. It follows that colleges have perforce needed to take account of what was going on in the outside world, of what the needs were of the industry and commerce in which their students were engaged and of what the needs were of students for their particular vocational aspirations. Whether the course was particularly vocational or more generally educational in type, the college has been conscious that the student was looking towards an active career in industry or commerce.

two-way flow

This is not to say that colleges were always sitting at the receiving end merely responding to the expressed needs of others. They have had to shape the needs as they saw them, put them into a form in which to present them to students and then get out to sell their ideas to employers, persuading them that what they had to offer was what the students and employers wanted. This aspect emphasises the two-way flow that has always existed between the colleges and the outside world, a flow of ideas and mutual response.

Colleges have a long experience of these interactions and of the necessary internal administrative arrangements to ensure their effective operation: the governing body and advisory boards as well as the very valuable and more personal relations which the principal, heads of department and staff have made with employers, trade unions representatives, personnel and training officers, industrial and commercial heads, careers officers and so on.

In any discussion of the response and interaction between colleges and other

bodies we are very far from starting from scratch. There is no need to convince those in the colleges that they must look beyond their own immediate concerns. This concept is central to the existence of the college of FE. But there is some value in stepping back from the scene to see what trends we can discern, to pick out new developments and think afresh about the organisational arrangements and implications for the college.

staff involvement One major trend is that towards a greater involvement of college staff in the organisation and operation of the colleges and their courses. The pre-war position of a relatively small number of colleges with a significant accent on evening classes and a relatively small full-time staff supplemented by a possibly larger number of part-time staff has radically changed. We now have in FE some 600 colleges, about 300,000 full-time and sandwich students, about 560,000 part-time day students and over 50,000 full-time teaching staff. This growth in numbers, expertise and professionalism of teaching staff has provided a wealth of soundly based experience, knowledge and understanding against which courses may be constructed and standards set and maintained with far less central control and direction than was once thought necessary. The emergence of new systems of college government with greater involvement of college staff, the development of academic boards, boards of study and other arrangements for academic control such as examination boards are examples of the recognition of the way in which colleges have grown up. With these bodies now in existence in most colleges it is for them to consider how best to meet the changing needs and how best to organise their internal arrangements. Colleges formalise themselves along different lines to suit the requirements which they themselves must meet and I don't think any uniform arrangements will necessarily meet these requirements.

Some outside bodies have long had connections with the colleges: local and national employers and their staffs; various government departments, notably the DES but also others such as the Department of Employment, Department of Health and Social Security and associated agencies; careers officers of the LEA and the Department of Employment - and more recently of the Employment Services agency; and HMIs. Perhaps I should include the LEA, though despite what some principals and heads of departments may think in their blackest moments, the LEA is hardly an outside body! Good relations between college and LEA are, of course, essential. The aims and objectives of the college must be understood and shared by the LEA as must the overall planning and provision by the LEA and the constraints of operation be understood and shared by the college. Further extensions of LEA-college relationships can be found in the relations within the regional advisory council and its various committees and activities, and also in the inter-relationships between colleges themselves. Of all these facets colleges have long experience.

suspicion If we turn to more recent developments we might look at the increasing attention being paid to relations between colleges and schools. Colleges have always recruited young people who have completed their full-time education in schools, and so have always been conscious of the need to establish some sort of relationship with the schools in their area. Many colleges have been able to gain access to the schools to explain to more

senior pupils just what colleges can offer and what opportunities they can provide. But it would be naive to pretend that school-college relations have always been smooth and cordial. The rapid growth in full-time FE, for the 16-19 age-group in particular, has not always been seen by schools as truly complementary to their own tradition for this age-group. There has been a tendency for mutual suspicion to develop, with schools doubtful about the colleges' objectives and the colleges considering the schools to be obstructive to their development and doubtful in their turn whether completely unbiased advice is given to pupils about options open to them for continuing full-time education. The picture is happily changing now but not all these problems have been solved. Each sector needs to make a continued effort to be aware of the aims, practices and provisions of the other. I do not think the FE world is entirely blameless and it should make every effort to ensure that it understands what the schools are about and what their objectives are.

linked courses

One aspect of school-college relationships upon which I would like to dwell is the recent growth in linked courses. There has been an almost explosive growth with numbers going up from about 10,000-15,000 young people on linked courses a few years ago to something of the order of 120,000-150,000 now. It is difficult to know the exact position at any one time because of the time-lag in collecting statistics but it is a very significant number. At their best they can bring a meaningful extension to the curriculum of school pupils, offering experiences and opportunities not otherwise available. To an administrator they have another attractive side in that they give effective and economic utilisation of the total educational resources of an area. Linked courses properly devised provide a true enrichment of the young person's total educational experience in his later years at school. Linked courses may be of the 'taster' variety in which young people try out a range of vocational courses and practical work, or they may extend the school curriculum by the inclusion of subjects which are not otherwise available, perhaps because of small demand or the specialist expertise and equipment required. Whether of either type there must be a firm link between studies at school and college. This means that the staffs of both must be involved in constructing and agreeing the aims and objectives of the course and must co-operate to solve the practical problems of time-tableing, transport, assessment of attainment and allocation of tutor responsibilities. A study has recently suggested that young people who have followed linked courses are more likely to continue their studies beyond school leaving age, and this is a point worth mulling over. The development of linked courses makes demands on the organisation of effective school-college relations, on college staff and on the way in which joint planning and operation is organised.

Another set of relations to which increasing attention is being devoted is that with the students themselves. This is a wide-ranging subject and I will do no more than mention it here. But student counselling and welfare services, educational and careers guidance involving the LEA careers service and the Employment Services Agency, social welfare organisations, student health services, etc., are all matters with which the college organisation must deal.

industrial training

The Training Services Agency of the Manpower Services Commission will have its impact on the colleges, just as the Employment Services Agency. Relations with the TSA are an extension of something which started to take place in colleges through the introduction of integrated courses developed by various industrial training boards. The joint planning and provision of courses between education and training interests is likely to continue to grow in importance and will demand further organisational arrangements. A great deal of attention is being given to the need to maintain closer relations between the educational courses provided in colleges and the training provided in industry. There are those who argue that the two stages, certainly early in a young person's career, are virtually indistinguishable and that we should be talking not about training and vocational education but about initial vocational preparation which is essentially a mix of education and training aspects. Whilst we already have integrated courses provided for craft and technician apprentices, we can expect to see more attention given to the need to involve training elements in our construction of courses in colleges. Further attention must also be paid to courses under TOPS. Already a considerable proportion of courses under the TOPS scheme is provided in colleges. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that further resources are to be given to training and retraining and I would expect colleges to play their part in this further development. Yet again colleges will need to organise themselves to respond and interact.

examining bodies

A different set of relations is that of the colleges with the examining and validating bodies. There are many such bodies operating in the FE field, including the CNAAB, TEC, BEC, CGLI, regional examining boards, RSA and so on. The joint committees are still operating and, although the existing National Certificates and Diplomas will eventually be phased out as TEC and BEC introduce their own courses and qualifications, the timescale is difficult to determine accurately and it is clear that there will be joint committees for some disciplines operating for many years.

It is interesting to look at the systems and philosophies on which the examining and validating bodies are based. Each has its own philosophy lying in a range between two extremes: one the entirely centrally devised and completely external system; the other the entirely college-developed syllabus and examination - the completely internal system. There are advantages and disadvantages in each, and most examining bodies have sought some compromise between these two extremes to try to obtain maximum advantages with minimum disadvantages. The advantages of a completely external system are:

- uniformity of content and standard
- a readily understandable and acknowledged qualification with wide currency
- ease of transfer for students
- economy of operation in terms of the finance and the effort to operate the system

Its disadvantages are:

- rigidity

- difficulty in introducing necessary updating and other changes
- difficulty in meeting specific local needs
- perhaps above all, a lack of involvement by teachers in devising curricula and assessing their own students' attainment
- a tendency to teach to an examination and for teachers to line themselves up with students against the examiner

The advantages and disadvantages of a completely internal system are almost the reverse, including among the advantages:

- complete involvement of teaching staff
- the possibility of catering for specific local needs
- attention to learning objectives rather than to training the students for examination hurdles

On the other hand the disadvantages include:

- diversity of content and possibly of standard
- a more complex and less widely understood qualification
- difficulty of students transferring from college to college
- greater demands on resources to operate the system

TEC and BEC trends

Most bodies have sought some compromise. The underlying trend is towards college-devised and assessed courses within centrally determined guidelines. This, for example, is the direction in which TEC has indicated it proposes to go, but nonetheless it will offer centrally devised standard units for colleges which wish to include them in their overall programmes. We have yet to see the direction in which BEC will go. BEC was established just over twelve months after TEC but it has made very effort to find out what people think of existing courses. BEC is on the point of publishing its consultative document and has gone to some pains to make it clear that this is intended to be truly consultative. The Council will not reach final decisions until people have commented.

TEC and BEC are at different stages of development but both lay great emphasis on the contribution to be made by employers and trainers as well as by those in the education service in the construction of the details of the courses. The clear trend is towards a firming up of relations between colleges and outside bodies for the formulation of courses and educational provision as a whole. Colleges will need to strengthen contacts with outside bodies and organise themselves to make full and efficient use of those contacts. Among these contacts are the contacts between the college themselves. Joint working will lead not only to co-operation in the use of scarce resources but to mutual help in setting and comparing standards.

consultation and delegation

It is for the colleges themselves to consider these points and to find solutions according to their own circumstances. If individual staff are to make their contribution and to avoid being overloaded in consultations and devising courses, there must be some system of internal delegation under overall co-ordinating arrangements. One of the dangers which we must try to avoid is an explosion in the number of committees and working parties in colleges.

They can become very time-consuming. Whatever system emerges will have to allow for greater delegation of activities among staff and perhaps an acceptance that a particular job is for a particular person to do and that it does not necessarily have to be taken to a committee. Within the framework set by the academic board, tasks will have to be delegated and left to individual staff.

In this short talk I have had to leave many relationships untouched, such as the questions of sandwich course students out on industrial placement and indeed the finding of placements for college-based students, the involvement of staff in regional bodies which, despite the establishment of TEC and BEC, will continue to have important functions, the questions of contacts with equipment suppliers, the problems of updating in individual disciplines, and so on. External relations are so interwoven into the fabric of the existence of the college that any attempt to list particular sets of relations must be a matter for selection. I have tried to highlight my selection of the main developments."

Discussion Arising

Questioned about the effect of conditions of service agreements on the time allowed for devising courses, Mr Titcomb noted that the economic situation and the constraints on resources could affect the rate at which change could take place. There could, however, be advantages in colleges working together, not least in an avoidance of needless repetition of work. Economic circumstances might force some authorities to say that a college could not have the staff to devise their own units and would have to take those centrally produced. But it was perhaps arguable whether significant variations between the schemes offered by different colleges could be justified, particularly at the more basic levels.

Methodological Approach

"In considering this theme the approach used is that of the college as an open system. This approach represents the adaption of work in biology and the physical sciences by Van Bertalanffy and others.

The college as an organisation is represented by a special class of open systems having some properties of its own but sharing other properties in common with all open systems.

The latter include the:

- (i) importation of energy from the environment;
- (ii) transformation of the imported energy into some product form which is characteristic of the system;
- (iii) exporting of that product into the environment;
- (iv) re-energizing of the system from sources in the environment;
- (v) tendency towards differentiation and elaboration; and
- (vi) interdependency of the system on its environment.

Boundaries represent the demarcation lines between the system and its environment and between the sub-systems which together constitute the system. Different barrier conditions exist which give different degrees of system openness.

This paper represents an outline of some of the boundaries external to the college which have, and are having, to be managed by some of the staff of the college.

The college as a system has, over the last seven years, become more complex as a result of attempting to maintain a steady state with its environment as that environment has changed.

North Nottinghamshire College of Further Education

The college is a border college within the district of Bassetlaw. The Local Authorities close by are Derbyshire, Sheffield, South Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Bassetlaw has a population of approximately 100,000 with urban and

rural characteristics. The area still retains its dependence upon coal mining which is changing somewhat as industrial development progresses.

The college is mainly local in character reflecting the educational, training and retraining needs of Bassetlaw. Some semi-regional characteristics are present in mining engineering and work preparation for handicapped young people.

The division of labour within the college is represented by:

Department of Construction

- Business and Management Studies
- Engineering
- General Studies and Science
- Liberal Arts and Crafts
- Mining Engineering
- Work Preparation

The full-time teaching staff model is:

- 1 Principal
- 1 Vice-Principal
- 7 Heads of Department
- 1 Link Course Co-ordinator
- 1 Principal Lecturer
- 5 Senior Lecturers
- 36 Lecturers Grade II
- 102 Lecturers Grade I

Part-time teaching staff numbers vary between 200 and 300.

Student hours and student enrolment for this session are 1.2 million (estimate) and 9533.

Brief details of college work are:

- (i) Industrial training in engineering (mechanical, electrical, prefabrication and automobile) and mining engineering (mechanical, electrical, mining production);
- (ii) Industrial retraining when required in building, engineering, commerce, laboratory sciences and mining engineering;
- (iii) Vocational education on both a full-time and part-time basis; the part-time basis being in the operative, craft, technician and higher technician fields;
- (iv) General education on both a full-time and a part-time basis;
- (v) Link courses with local schools both in the college and in the schools;
- (vi) Work preparation on a full-time basis for handicapped young people;
- (vii) Adult education on a day and evening basis for North Nottinghamshire; and
- (viii) Developing affiliation work with a Borstal, a Prison and a Mental Hospital.

The work is undertaken within:

- (i) the college and its four annexes;
- (ii) forty other educational premises; and
- (iii) some of the premises of industry and public institutions.

College Boundaries.

College boundaries are viewed as both

internal to the organisation; and
external to the organisation.

The boundaries are resultant from divisions of labour and responsibilities allocated within these divisions. They represent a barrier for many types of interaction between people within the allocated responsibilities and they also represent some facilitating device for the particular types of transactions necessary for organisational functioning.

Over the last seven years, the boundaries that the college has been required to manage have increased. This increase has been due to

the curriculum development of the college and
the increasing complexity of its environment.

A In broad terms some major changes in boundary management have included:

- (i) internal boundaries within firms and public institutions as a result of off-the-job training; retraining; in-firm education; sub-contracting; project work with students and work experience for 'normal' and handicapped young people;
- (ii) internal boundaries within the social services as a result of adult education for the socially disadvantaged and senior citizens; further education and training of handicapped young people; and student counselling;
- (iii) internal boundaries within local schools (secondary modern, comprehensive, grammar and public) as a result of link courses for 14-16 year old pupils and 16-19 year old pupils;
- (iv) internal boundaries within primary schools as a result of adult education for the socially disadvantaged;
- (v) internal boundaries within special schools as a result of further education and training for handicapped young people;
- (vi) internal boundaries within the Department of Employment as a result of retraining and training for handicapped young people;
- (vii) internal boundaries within Local Education Authorities as a result of further education and training for handicapped young people;
- (viii) internal boundaries of the Department of Health and Security as a result of student counselling and further education and training for handicapped young people; and
- (ix) internal boundaries of Voluntary Bodies as a result of further education and training for handicapped young people.

B Some examples in more detail are:

Work Preparation for Handicapped Young People

Development of this work started in 1969 on a full-time basis and now includes 120 young people. The handicaps at present include:

Spina Bifida
Cerebral Palsy
Accidents (burns, explosions, road)
Other physical handicaps (heart lesions, diabetes, asthma,
kidney and metabolic disorders)
Emotionally disturbed
Epileptic
Remedial
Educational sub-normal (moderate and severe)
Partial sight
Partial hearing
Deaf

Remedial and general education is undertaken by staff who are specialists in the teaching of the handicapped. Work experience is co-ordinated from within the specialist unit. Vocational education and training is undertaken in six Departments by technical staff who number around thirty.

A specialist operative workshop employing sub-contracts with outside firms is used in addition to normal college facilities.

Boundary management has increased as the work has developed. Some of the boundaries at which negotiations have to take place are:

- (i) within six LEA Departments to facilitate student admission to the courses as well as associated transport grants;
- (ii) within 22 careers offices at Principal and District Levels to facilitate student admission to the courses and student placement in work;
- (iii) within the medical services which includes six main points of reference: for medical inspections, medical reports, medical treatment and the provision of aids; this can extend according to both handicap nature and handicap numbers;
- (iv) within Social Service divisions (six main offices and 20 sub-offices) to facilitate provisions for material and general deprivation in addition to students in the care of Local Authorities;
- (v) within six LEA Special Education Services and 50 individual schools/units of schools: to facilitate student admission to courses;
- (vi) within the Department of Employment including points of reference at National Level (1); Regional Level (3); Local Level (22): these are for special provision for training grants and student payment in addition to work placement;
- (vii) within the Department of Health and Social Security including points of reference at National Level (1); Regional Level (2); Local Level (20): these are for supplementary allowances and awards for special equipment;
- (viii) within industry, commerce and public service (36 points of reference): to facilitate student work experience and sub-contracting for the operative workshop;

- (ix) within Voluntary Bodies including points of reference at National Level (3); Regional Level (6); Local Level (10): to facilitate awareness of the courses available and assist the Voluntary Bodies in their work;
- (x) within individual student families for parental involvement, guidance and decision-making (at case conferences).

Student Counselling

Student counselling was further developed by the appointment of a full-time counsellor in 1971. The function can be represented by its four components of

educational guidance
vocational guidance
personal guidance
liaison services

Personal guidance represents a major aspect of the work and is often linked with boundary negotiations within specialist agencies so that appropriate confidential assistance can be quickly obtained on behalf of the student.

Boundaries that have to be managed in the interests of students include:

- (i) LEA at Area and Central level: generally with regard to finance;
- (ii) Department of Social Security: generally with regard to finance, eg supplementary benefit, sudden deprivation;
- (iii) Department of Health: family planning, disability benefits;
- (iv) Department of Employment: job placement with redeployment section;
- (v) Medical, Psychiatric and Psychological services: drugs, emotional disturbances, unwanted pregnancies;
- (vi) Police, Legal Services, Prison Authorities, Probation Services: for criminal accusations, detention centre;
- (vii) Abortion clinics, Adoption Societies: unwanted pregnancies;
- (viii) Social Services: long term support; and
- (ix) Estate Agents: accommodation for foreign students.

Exact points of reference have to be obtained according to the nature of the assistant required.

Adult Education: Socially Disadvantaged

Provision started in 1970 at the request of the LEA. The purpose was to attempt to break the cycle of social deprivation by appropriate education for mothers living within a large council estate which served a local colliery. It represented a co-operative effort between LEA officers and appropriate advisory staff, Social Services Department, Further Education and Primary Education.

Boundary management initially was located:

- (i) within the Social Services Department at District (one reference point) and case worker (one reference point) levels: to influence parents for attendance;
- (ii) within an infant school (one reference point) for premises for adult education, a play-group, storage of equipment and feedback upon the results as indicated from the children attending; and
- (iii) at various reference points for the protection of the development from the possible negative influence of interested parties.

Further development extended boundaries into:

- (i) transport provision for parents and children; and
- (ii) additional premises for play-group provision and storage of equipment by the LEA.

Extension of the work by the college and development by the LEA of human resources has increased the boundaries in the Social Services, Health Department and education fields.

At the present time, twelve courses operate each year, five of which are on-going. They are located in five areas within the college catchment area.

In addition to the boundaries concerned with the use of these premises, reference points have to be maintained at:

- (i) District Adviser Level (1);
- (ii) Probation Officer Level (1) and with nine Social Workers;
- (iii) Health Department Level (2) and with six Health Visitors; and
- (iv) Infant School Level with eight Community Teachers which will, next session, increase to 15."

Discussion Arising

Questioned about the effects of the adult education for the socially disadvantaged scheme, Mr Clegg said it had been noted that the children had been coming to school better dressed and no longer incontinent, that parents were taking an interest in the school and that teachers were seeing some benefit to the children in their educational environment. Mr Clegg also reported that all but two of the handicapped young people had been placed in open employment after the college's courses. Some members of conference wondered whether there had been adverse reaction by staff to the scheme for handicapped young people, and Mr Clegg acknowledged that there had been fears that it would affect the suitability of the college for 'A' level and similar work but the opposition was a minority now that more staff were involved and the results of this work had been seen and validated.

Members are asked to review methods of integrating FE College activities with those of schools and to formulate plans for improvement and development.

C M Turner,
Staff Tutor,
Coombe Lodge

Introduction to the project

"I shall try to orientate you towards a few areas of discussion in your syndicates. It is useful to consider them in eight areas.

- 1 The subject of integrating FE colleges with schools is clearly one that evokes in most people some emotional response - a mixture of aggressiveness and defensiveness, and a lack of trust. It is understandable, given that colleges are dependent upon schools for the supply of students, but one will never get very far in integration unless one faces the fact that this is an emotionally charged area. One needs to force people to examine their feelings and to see if all of them are informed by the rationale of the situation or whether by purely personal emotion.
- 2 You have also the business of passing information from one system to another so that they know about each other. Both sides have factually mistaken ideas about what the other does, and do not understand the informal roles and norms of each other's institutions. A prerequisite of successful integration is mutual familiarity.
- 3 Link courses now need to be looked at strictly in terms of benefits gained for resources expended - and particularly whether more benefits might have been gained if the same resources had been expended elsewhere.
- 4 The sharing of resources between institutions.
- 5 Rationalisation of provision of courses across institutions.
- 6 Guidance for school pupils about the opportunities offered by colleges and a system of selection for different institutions particularly where there is rivalry between them. This is presumably best done by either of the interested parties but by an overarching mechanism.
- 7 Link-up of curriculum is even more critical. Given the total lack of any national direction of curriculum, any institution can be doing any curriculum in any kind of way. When students move, one becomes aware that not only is there no effective link-up but hardly ever an attempt at it. Every area needs subject panels - formal or informal - in which teachers of all linked institutions can discuss common problems; if there is not, then subject teachers are not playing fair with their students. This is something which any of you can initiate on your own, if only as an interest group.

- 8 An increasing number of activities take place now outside the institutions although they are manned by people from the institutions, eg adult literacy, home-based English language courses for Asian women and other activities in the community. This is an excellent opportunity for joint working by schools and colleges because they clearly require both enthusiasm and expertise of which there may not be enough in any one institution.

You may also want to consider reorganisation of local authority provision or a total local authority plan for the 16-19 age-group. In some areas it is necessary that a central body assumes responsibility for the intake of students at 16 into different kinds of institution. This can only be done by the LEA, and such rationalisation has to increase the power of the LEA over the institutions. You may also wish to consider the Tertiary College system, the place of the 6th Form Colleges, and will no doubt have local examples of various solutions which you can raise for discussion with your colleagues."

Witness Session

Three witnesses joined the syndicates to assist in the discussion of integrating FE college activities with those of schools: Mr J Bell, Senior Adviser (Secondary), Dorset; Mr N C Clegg, Principal of North Nottinghamshire College of Further Education and visiting tutor for the study conference; and Mr P A Lineham, Vice-Principal and Director of Studies of North Devon College, Barnstaple.

payment Mr J Bell was questioned about linked courses and about the schools' perspective on co-operation with FE colleges. He reported that in Dorset there were currently 450 pupils from 11 schools attending linked courses at South Dorset Technical College and nearly 1000 from 9 schools at Poole Technical College. A working party had recently studied the financial arrangements and recommended that, whereas the LEA had effectively been paying twice-over on linked courses for staff in college and school, schools should henceforth make a payment to the colleges. They would pay a levy based on school staffing ratios for the work undertaken in colleges and a sum for materials based on school capitation for the appropriate age group. It did not appear, as yet, to be affecting demand, but it would be September before one could be sure. Questioned in one syndicate about mutual suspicions between college and school, Mr Bell commented that a few years ago colleges had suspected schools of unloading their undesirable pupils but one did not still hear this said. Questioned about the desirability of having one institution to cater for all 16-18 education, he thought geographical factors were important. In Dorset, for example, schools were at most 5 or 6 miles from a college in the Bournemouth area but up to 28 miles away in the west of the county.

something realistic Mr N C Clegg reported that his college, North Nottinghamshire College of FE, undertook linked courses with 15 grammar and comprehensive schools, involving some 2000 students. Of these 500 attended the courses in the

college and 1500 in the schools, in the latter case the college staff travelling up to 12-15 miles to the schools to teach. Discussing them in one syndicate group, Mr Clegg said that what the youngsters wanted in the linked courses was to do something realistic and they thought work was realistic. (And, he added, some of them were ready to go to work at 14 and would benefit more from education if they were allowed to come back when they matured, as some miners came back to his college in their thirties). Mr Clegg feared for the future of linked courses in the coming economic restrictions: in many cases the authorities were providing double staffing resources in that school and college were awarded staffing for the work. New conditions of service would also have their effect if travelling time for staff was counted as teaching time.

trust and
communications

Mr P Lineham described the North Devon College, Barnstaple, and his role as Vice-Principal and Director of Studies. The college undertakes all 16-18 studies for its immediate catchment area and vocational further education for a wider area, co-operating with schools through an academic board. Mr Lineham pointed out that one should not be doctrinaire about solutions for 16-18 education: in one area the best solution might be 11-16 schools with a 16 plus college, but in another an 11-18 all-through comprehensive. He was questioned in one syndicate group particularly about the suspicion which his form of tertiary college could arouse, and he acknowledged that a compound of ignorance and fear might in other areas prevent the co-operation required for an arrangement like North Devon College. Schools feared the loss of their sixth-forms and a consequent loss of status. The crucial factors were personal trust and communications. School staff should be invited to quiz college staff and to visit the college for a day. Once the confidence of the school headteacher and his staff had been gained, one could make contact with school pupils and explain the opportunities the college offered. Some parents also might be suspicious initially but if the college were given time to prove itself such feelings would quickly disappear.

Syndicate Reports on Project A

The problems of communication and interaction between schools and colleges were discussed in all three groups, and all suggested that liaison officers should be appointed. One syndicate emphasised that communications should be personal, rather than confined to letters and circulars, and should be at all levels from principal to lecturers and should include invitations to school teachers to discussions in colleges. Another syndicate thought that co-operation should be initially at senior staff level and then involve all teachers. Other suggestions included transfer of records from schools to colleges, representation on each others' governing bodies, joint committees and clear information for parents and students about the range of LEA provision.

The groups discussed linked courses and there were recommendations for better planning. One syndicate particularly wanted to see their development for the more able and older students.

guidance and liaison Much attention was paid to student counselling and careers advice. One syndicate particularly identified the careers service as having a central role in informing parents and students and in liaising between colleges and all their external contacts. Another group suggested FE colleges could help with careers advice in schools and another recommended more positive planning of counselling including the use of careers conventions for groups of schools.

anti-duplicating Groups were concerned about the duplication of 16-19 provision in schools
machine and colleges. LEAs could not and should not allow duplication, recommended one syndicate, and another syndicate sought improved distribution of resources by LEAs. It was suggested too that some machinery should be established - perhaps a board of management of teachers, lecturers and education officers - to devise a rationale of local provision and to provide minority subjects in one centre.

One syndicate thought that the tertiary college was the best method of integrating 16-19 provision but that the method in any particular area should take note of geographical and political factors. Another group expected an extension of self-directed learning systems and therefore of resource centres. There was also concern that before a certificate of extended education was introduced there should be close consultation between schools and colleges - otherwise there was a danger that schools might hold on to students who would have gone to colleges.

'Members are asked to identify major current and likely future developments with other educational institutions and with other areas of work and to outline draft policy plans to cater for these developments.'

Witnesses

Four witnesses joined the syndicates to discuss developments with other educational institutions: Mr D J Everett, Principal of High Wycombe College of Technology and Art; Mr B Harvey, Principal Adviser, Community Education, Leicestershire; Mr P Holmes, Director, South West Regional Management Centre, Bristol Polytechnic, and Mr S H Towler, Assistant Education Officer (Careers), Hampshire.

Mr Everett spoke of the future of the institutions of higher education being formed out of the amalgamations of colleges of education with further education colleges. His college, High Wycombe College of Technology and Art, is merging with a college of education twelve miles away to form the Buckinghamshire College of Higher Education, and he is its director-designate. Questioned in one syndicate about the role of such institutions, Mr Everett talked of the exciting opportunity to blend the whole of the resources of a technical college. To be able to offer courses of both further and higher education was a strength. Neither industry nor society differentiated between FE and HE, and in his college's national role for the furniture and timber industries it would not be logical to hive off lower from higher level work. His college offered postgraduate qualifications in furniture and timber courses and in export marketing, and institutions of higher education would be able to push ahead on a narrow specialist front such as this without seeking to emulate the breadth of universities or polytechnics. The institutions would develop their Dip HE courses, though the opportunity had been lost for a national definition. Buckinghamshire's Dip HE could be taken as a terminal qualification; as the first two years of teacher training (to which end studies of education and social services were included) leading to a 3rd year B.Ed., or as the first part of a modular degree leading to a 3rd year BA. The education of student teachers in the new merged colleges enabled their courses to be of greater breadth and relevance and to offer more choice than had been possible in the colleges of education. At the same time the 'professionalism' of the college of education staff would contribute to the in-service courses of the whole new college.

community elements Mr B Harvey said that all education ought to be community-related education from the primary level which in order to be effective had to relate to the community to the different forms for secondary, FE and polytechnic institutions. The endeavour had to be to create an educated community, he told one syndicate: if we did not create new styles of life with the appropriate values, we would find it more and more difficult to educate our children. Mr Harvey distinguished between two approaches. First, there was the provision of facilities for the community in terms of buildings, equipment and sometimes staff, which with luck toppled over into community development. Secondly, there was the realisation that in order to achieve the right relationship between teacher and children the teacher could no longer teach the child as just someone in a classroom but had to involve many elements from the community. In further education colleges it was important to appoint staff who were solely concerned with community elements, so that departments in the college would be enabled to relate their resources to the community. He cited how when a college was being planned local groups could raise finance for improved facilities, eg sports hall, bar, etc., and the LEA would then appoint staff - an Assistant Principal (Community) and other specialist and general staff - to develop the facilities. From that stage on, everyone had to think in terms of community participation not just community provision, in terms of joint responsibility not just in provision management terms. Mr Harvey thought that the financial crisis and the shortage of resources would increase public pressure to use educational plant and would force people to look at resources in terms of needs.

regional links Mr P Holmes described the regional management centres, such as the one of which he is director at Bristol, as an exciting and interesting concept. He emphasised that they had to be a regional concept, not seen as one institution, and he noted that his own centre had changed direction towards greater regional involvement since its inception in 1972. The RMC had to be thought of, he told one syndicate, in terms of regional resources and partnership between all the institutions which contributed. What were important were the working relationships established between institutions and staff rather than elaborate structures. The role of the parent centre was in the first instance essentially pump-priming, and staff from Bristol Polytechnic had worked in the smaller colleges and made clear that the work they did was the property of that college. After a while they would withdraw from general teaching. The polytechnic could not play big brother. There were some jobs which other colleges could do better. An inventory of resources and activities had been drawn up by the regional planning committee and efforts were made to devolve responsibilities to colleges. Educational services had, Mr Holmes said, to be developed where they were needed, to best meet local need. The local college knew its local area.

careers advice Mr S H Towler described the work of the Careers Service in Hampshire schools and colleges and the role of the careers officer as the vocational guidance specialist who works as a member of a team committed to helping young people make a wise choice of career and/or of a course in FE/HE. The careers officer was in a good position to interpret further education to schools and to the colleges. It was important, he told one syndicate, that young people were not only aware of what was available in colleges but also

of the actual content of courses and how these varied. Careers officers also had to advise the youngsters on whether they would be better going to college full-time or starting a job and attending part-time. Mr Towler commented that he had long felt it would be better for some young people to go out to work at 16 or 18 rather than keep them in the education system regardless. During the discussion in one syndicate, Mr Towler emphasised that it was important that careers advice should be seen in the context of the general educational development of the individual. Linked courses also had to be integrated with work before and after in schools. He hoped to be able to provide more careers advice in further education colleges when he had more staff. It was important that college staff, and heads of department in particular, saw that careers advisers would be coming to support and strengthen what they were already doing and that they did not need to be suspicious.

Syndicate Reports on Project B

Syndicates were concerned about the development of relationships with other educational institutions in two areas particularly, diversification and regionalisation, both raising questions about the allocation of resources. One syndicate suggested that LEAs should prepare five year rolling plans with which to analyse needs and the maximisation of resources, including the sharing of accommodation. Another syndicate was not satisfied that the diversification of the former colleges of education into arts subjects nor all the Dip HE courses would prove to be justified. More valuable were those Dip HEs with a strong link to technical education.

regional co-operation

The regional management centres were seen as useful models for regional co-operation and sharing of resources. There was a difficulty in deciding an appropriate regional structure, and one syndicate stated that there would have to be very sound reasons to move from a satisfactory locally-based FE system. Another syndicate thought that a useful means to maximise resources would be always to appoint teachers to the service of the authority rather than to an individual college.

One syndicate expected some of the existing freedoms to be curtailed. Students would not have unlimited choice of course or institution and might be given some direction in terms of employment at the end of their course.

community provision

Another major area of concern was adult education and community provision. Syndicates considered the adult literacy programme and the requirements of disadvantaged members of the community. There was difficulty in identifying the community and its needs. One syndicate suggested that existing fee structures should be simplified or removed. Others supported the ideas of community schools and of the Open College, which had been thought of as an extension of the opportunities offered by the Open University.

Other developments which the syndicates discussed were the introduction of TEC and BEC courses, the possibility of compulsory day release, improved student counselling and teaching centred on the student rather than the subject.

During the discussion of the syndicate reports, Mr J Buck, Director of Education, Dudley, suggested that one of the difficulties of discussing higher education at present was the result of the over-concentration in policies on the colleges of education and teacher supply. The diversification into arts courses was seen as a means to protect the staff of teacher training institutions. The former colleges of education would, however, have to adjust from having groups of 900-1,000 students on one area of study to having perhaps 350 students and a variety of subjects. He said also that he would be reluctant to see fees for adult education abolished when finance was so short.

A teach-in on Perceptions of the Future was held with Mr J Buck, Director of Education, Dudley, Mr N C Clegg, Mr D C Spencer and Mr G E Wheeler. Mr Buck introduced the subject:

"We have been in a period of expansion in education. Every year we have been geared to knowing that we would cater for more and more. The 1950s were a time of gentle growth because nationally investment in education was seen as investment for the future. There were those of us who tried to resist this notion because of the backlash it might have. However, everyone saw the future in the hands of education and the 1960s were even better than the 1950s: you've never had it so good; you justified it and you got it. It was a period of very rapid expansion.

falling birth-rate The 1970s, it has been said, are to be a period in which to maximise the use of resources. What does this mean? First, we have to forget everything we based our thinking on - which was growth. The indications are that there will not be growth for a number of reasons. The birth-rate is falling. What happens in an area in which the birth-rate has risen from 2,500 steadily to 3,500 and suddenly drops to 3,000? What happens if it drops further to 2,500 or 2,000? What are the implications for the education service over the next 20 years? Schools will be emptied, and there will be a vast overprovision for the 18 plus age-group. Add to these factors the disaffection with further and higher education which has become apparent in the past three or four years in the number of students who go on to university and polytechnic. Students are even beginning to wonder if it is worth staying on after 16 at school. We are no longer in a growth situation and we have to think in entirely different terms.

shrinking economy It might be a sweeping generalisation to say that the investment in education for the future has only produced Black Papers, riots on the terraces and disaffection in the universities. This view has, however, taken a very strong hold on the people who are influential on the question of whether money goes to education or another sphere. For example, in the local authority concern we in education were the personal service and we got the money. In the last five years another personal service has grown up - the social services. People are beginning to see the value for the community as a whole in putting more money into care of old people, and assistance for the disadvantaged. At a time of a steady economy there is only a certain amount of finance available and the growth of one service means less for another, but

we have now a shrinking economy. What happens if people say education has had its share? Who are we to say that other areas should not be given their turn?

actual cutback

What will be the immediate effect of the shortage of money? There is much talk of cutting public expenditure, and it might be that even programmes which have been approved will have to be cut. It might mean paying penalty clauses and leaving buildings unfinished. What does 1.5 per cent growth for the education service mean? In my authority it will require 3.96 per cent increase in expenditure to carry on what we are doing now, and so 1.5 per cent next year and 1.3 per cent in the following year amount to an actual cutback. If I cut out everything peripheral and do not touch manpower, I might save 0.5 per cent. Yet I have to cut more than 1 per cent, and so I have to hit teachers in all aspects of the service. If we want to put on additional courses to meet the needs of the community, where are we going to find the resources? And what would happen if the economic situation gets worse and we are cut back to zero growth, and if this goes on for five or six years?

We shall have to consider what to do with the premises we have at present. Are there other local government uses? Can residential accommodation be used for housing or hostels for the maladjusted and unmarried mothers?

different
perspective

The education service will have a shrinking amount of money and a shrinking population to cater for. There will not be growth, and we have to stop thinking as though there will be. We have to change our total perspective in looking to the future. The future will not be like the past."

Discussion Arising

The panel and the members of conference picked up Mr Buck's warnings about the economic situation. Questioned if there was slack in the system at present and whether maximum use was being made of resources, Mr Buck noted two possible developments: use of ancillaries beside highly paid professionals in schools, and a rethinking of the choice of subjects offered in schools, often from third form level. It might also be necessary to assess whether the nursery programme could be afforded, and even whether part-time education would have to be introduced - it was as serious as that. Each institution would have to manage next year on the cash it had this year.

Mr Clegg warned that we might be faced with a short-term depression and should therefore be careful about the pruning now, and some members of conference wondered whether there was a danger of over-reacting and whether there was not a danger of finding we were under-provided for a rising population. Mr Buck answered that the problem was both a falling birth-rate - the figures for those who would enter school in five years were known - and a falling share of the GNP. For example, whereas his authority had reckoned that a new housing estate would mean one child of school age per house, the average figure was now just 0.57 per house.

Mr D C Spencer said that it was a question of the best allocation of resources and he reminded the conference of the monitoring of staff in polytechnics, noting that the institutions had maintained existing staff to student provision despite warnings that it was uneconomic.

competing for
resources

The education service was also in competition with other services. Mr Buck commented that some authorities had decided that the social services should expand by 5 per cent next year, and this would mean that other services would get a much smaller increase. Another authority had stopped school building next year in order to build a new town hall. There was, said Mr Buck, a growing feeling that the education service had failed in so many areas - the old, the drop-outs, the unmarried mothers. Members of conference suggested that the problem was that society's expectations of education had been unrealistic. Mr Buck thought that it was the politicians' expectations which had been unrealistic but that the education service had achieved what it had been trying to do - children were more inquiring, standards in reading and mathematics were improved. One member of conference asked what FE was if it was not a social service.

ten years on

Discussion shifted to the future of further education, looking ahead perhaps ten years. Members of conference foresaw developments such as an increased importance of industrial training and retraining, a de-institutionalisation and yet greater influence from the Open University and possibly an Open College. Mr Buck said there was a need for FE to have a rationale for its 16-19 provision. One of the greatest dangers which FE faced was that over-investment in school building against a falling birth-rate so that there would be space in comprehensive schools for all the 16-19 provision. Mr Clegg thought that if there was compulsory part-time education for the 16-19 age-group it would not all be vocational with some general education. If accommodation and resources were not available in FE, then one alternative could be comprehensive schools. There was criticism from a member of conference of the tendency to develop full-time courses because they were simpler to organise, even though one full-time student took up the space of five part-time. One member reminded the conference that many colleges were still in old church halls.

more direction

Mr Clegg thought that there could be more direction of students to places available and of students into a compulsory period of teaching when they had completed higher education. One of the syndicate reports had suggested more direction and Mr Clegg commented that it was only more direction for the elite which at present had the freedom to choose. He saw no reason why at a time of scarce resources society should pay for a Nottingham student to go to London when he could have taken the course in Nottingham.

Mr Wheeler speculated about the possibility of offering less choices in schools and colleges, whether of school meals or of courses. Other countries did not have this luxury of diversification. There was a discussion among members about the justification for different syllabuses for similar courses in neighbouring colleges and about the justification for the different teaching hours required by different examining bodies for similar courses.

what demand? Colleges had to face up to the problems of a reduced increase in the number of students staying on for higher education. Mr Wheeler commented that students did consider the economic factors involved in proceeding in education and that society had in effect changed the price. Mr Spencer said there was no evidence potential student demand had been met and cited advertisements which had produced hundreds of applications for places on courses.

A member of conference read from Alice in Wonderland the conversation between Alice and the caterpillar about the size Alice wanted to be. Alice's complaint to the caterpillar was: "One doesn't like changing so often, you know".

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